# THE
# CHRISTIAN SAGA

NORMAN TOWAR BOGGS

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# THE CHRISTIAN SAGA

## VOLUME ONE

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# THE CHRISTIAN SAGA

BY

NORMAN TOWAR BOGGS

*In Two Volumes*

VOLUME I

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La vie se roule en sommeil agité, ses amitiés ses meilleurs fantômes: la beauté veille. Et à la mémoire de tous les créateurs de la beauté de Paris, y compris évidemment les auteurs de tous ces beaux ouvrages d'art à Paris, dont l'appel a souvent réveillé, et dont l'esprit a bien des fois consolé son auteur en l'écrivant, ce livre est dedié, en gratitude profonde.

# PREFACE

The preface is an author's sole opportunity to humor himself openly and frankly in an historical sketch, a temptation best avoided by brevity. Allow me to use mine in explaining briefly the limited purpose of the following pages.

The reader should not hope to find in them a history of Christian life, of Christian doctrine, nor of Christian institutions; neither of any one of them separately, nor of all of them drawn together, as a brief account of the history of Christianity. The consecutive chapters of this sketch do not attempt to put the reader inside of an evolving religious complex, to follow the unfolding of potentialities that existed in a seed, sown by Jesus in the hearts of a few followers, later to expand and complicate in the more extended environment of European civilization.

They aim rather, within the limits of space imposed, to recount, in narrative, in quotation, in critical exposition, and in suggestion, the adventure of Christendom with its Christianity.

They may raise with the reader, as indeed such facts as he has been able to review have raised in the mind of the author, the question as to whether Christianity has not all but lived through a cycle, during which it entered, in a broad and complex way, into all the institutional forms, and into all the sanctions which safeguarded European social existence; subsequently to be pushed, slowly and gradually, out of the rôle which had been given it to play.

In view of many words remembered and handed on as having been spoken by Jesus, in view of his own personal experience with his social environment, in view of the situation and attitude of the early Christian community, and, finally, in view of the history of Christendom's Christianity, it is difficult to be convinced that it was given and accepted an altogether consistent rôle. But, at all events, an ideal did gradually develop which envisioned, not a type of civilization merely, but something more, a concrete social entity, so identified with Christianity that it is difficult to say whether, in the intention of the ideal, Christianity belonged to this social entity, or it belonged to Christianity. It is for the conception and ideal of such a social entity that the word Christendom stands.

Under such circumstances it was inevitable that there should arise a Christianity of Christendom. But something further was not less inevitable, from the moment that the religion inspired by Jesus of Nazareth had so linked itself with an evolving civilization as even to suggest the concept of Christendom. The civilization and the religion could no longer develop separately.

Few would be so hardy to-day as to suggest that the personality and teaching of Jesus, or the lesson of his tragic fate, as treasured by Christianity in its four accepted Gospels, had conspicuously molded the form, delineated the attitude, or directed the changing course of European history. One may indeed go a step farther. The personality of Jesus presents, more definitely than any other one thing, a conception of the intrinsic meaning of human existence, a distinctive type of human motivation, that definitely assesses and places the fundamental values which are repeatedly exemplified in varying form, by the changing concrete problems which human experience creates. It would be more than difficult to-day to view the civilization of Christendom as gradually developing toward the acceptance of the intrinsic meaning of human existence which he emphasized, or the adoption of the type of motivation which he exemplified in actions where human relations were involved.

Consequently, in view of the undeniably great rôle that a religion called Christianity has played in European history, it would seem safe to assume that Christendom has taken its Christianity along with it upon its course; that there is, or has been, a Christianity of Christendom, whether or not there is, was, or ever will be any other Christianity.

And so, if the author has not too grossly misread the stream of occurrences which has now for some time carried him upon a voyage of adventure, that proved in many places, for him at least, a voyage of discovery; if, further and more rashly, there be substantial ground for the assumption that Christianity has all but lived through such a cycle as above suggested, what we have before us in brief sketch is a vast, impressive and comprehensive drama. It is a drama in which the effective forces of the European world take and use, for something less than two thousand years, a Christianity which, in many ways, these same effective forces control and mold. The action of this drama mounts toward a climax, a world-view which embodies, in very patchy achievement, the ideal of Christendom. But, from this point, the arc of this dramatic action falls again toward its defining chord. Institutions which had grown along with the ideal of Christendom exploit their prerogatives, then harden to defend them. A new type of energy and motivation arises, finds Christianity useful for a time, gains in influence, accumulates self-confidence. And before this new effective force the religion which had saturated Christendom, and which Christendom had saturated, is slowly, step by step, hardly consciously, yet always steadily, pushed aside, as not only unnecessary but increasingly burdensome.

Within the broad sweep of this action many religious experiments are attempted, some few of which fall upon fertile soil at an opportune moment. An unstable fluid mass of social uncertainty is energized, is ultimately drawn together, crystallized, in altered human attitude. Christendom orients its course anew, moves with a different pulse and pace. But it does not take its inspirers with it. They are left behind, somewhat as master paintings in a museum, to be contemplated by individuals if they will, to complicate the social pattern with such individual inspiration as they generate, while Christendom moves on, twisting and breaking what it cannot use, bending, molding, or diluting to its purpose what it takes.

This then is the drama. The labor and adventure of it finished for the author, its plot thus briefly indicated to the reader, *Pro-*

*logue* may be requested to raise the curtain in still briefer words: "Elijah has indeed come, and men have done unto him even as they were minded to do."

N. T. B.

Paris,
May 19, 1931.

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# BOOK I

# RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND—SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE

# THE CHRISTIAN SAGA

## I

WHATEVER may be its destiny, in its history Christianity is the religion of Europe. In Europe it found its most favorable soil. In Europe it took root and flourished. Afterwards, when late in the fifteenth century the era of exploration and colonial expansion began, wherever European civilization spread, there Christianity went with it as an inseparable part. So the history of Christianity may properly be called the story of religion in Europe during the last, shall we say, eighteen centuries.

Christianity was not, to be sure, the sole religion of Europe during this entire period. It took roughly twelve, indeed even more, of these centuries for this religion to extend its influence over the entire continent. Moreover for not even half of these twelve centuries was it predominant in the number of its adherents. For the first three centuries of what we call the Christian era the fate of Christianity might well have seemed to hang in the balance, but before the fourth century had closed its future was assured, and for the next thousand years it pushed steadily to what was clearly the foremost place in European civilization.

Before the birth of Christianity Europe had already had many diverse histories, not a few of which never have been written, some of which probably never can be written. Several of the civilizations which would form the subject matter of such histories were, superficially perhaps and still with what seems remarkable assimilation, gradually gathered together into what we call ancient classical civilization, dominated intellectually by Greece, politically for the longest period by the Roman Empire. During considerably more than half of the first six Christian centuries this ancient classical civilization was slowly dissipating; its currents were being turned aside, engulfed, scattered by many tides of conflict from which was to emerge the calmer water of a new social order.

The doctrine and the institutions of Christianity attained a large measure of coherence even before this dissolution was clearly apparent. Christianity met this social chaos with certain religious-metaphysical conceptions, definite organs of associated power, already established. This great advantage it possessed during a period of centuries throughout which nothing else had much appearance of stability. It is therefore hardly enough to say that Christianity became an inseparable part of the emerging social order which was to succeed the ancient world in Europe. It long constituted the only relatively unchanging institution among a bewildering flux of peoples and governing powers. When later, toward the thirteenth century, this new social order had completed its forms and arrived at full consciousness, Christianity had become decidedly both the foundation and the keystone of the entire social structure. It was then not only the religion of Europe. It gave to all European history a measure of political unity and a remarkable degree of unity in its emotional reactions. It helped more than any other one thing to bring about a certain unity of social pattern over the larger part of the continent. Intellectually it had become long before the organ of education, while about its fundamental theological conceptions all ordered learning was gathered and grouped in nice subordination.

Even the breaking up of Christian unity of church and doctrine which began with the Protestant Reformation in Germany in the sixteenth century did not dislodge Christianity as the religion of Europe. No other religion has become in any sense its rival. We may speak to-day of religion and irreligion in Europe, but religion still means Christianity in one form or another.

But if it be true that Christianity is the religion of Europe, it is only a little less true that Christianity is European.

This statement is perhaps less evident on its face than the preceding. To begin with, Jesus was a Jew, hence an Asiatic and not a European. His personal religious experience had its roots deep in the religious conceptions, and in the national religious experience of the Jewish people. However the area in which his life was passed, while in its most intimate phases of life Jewish, was governed from a city called after a Roman emperor, which city, for reasons of religious scruple, scarcely any Jews would inhabit.[1] Moreover, though this Galilee was a small and unimportant enough country itself, it was a district through which passed several great roads, over which passed the trade and the gossip of important centers where Greek ideas and Roman practical interests dominated.[2] It has indeed been said of this geographical background of the life and ministry of Jesus that it was "Greek in all that the name implies of busy life, imposing art and sensuous religion." [3]

Also Jesus was, by reason of his own personality, something more than a Jew. He gave voice to social ideals so universal that similarities, substantial counterparts sometimes, may be found in the words of other ethical thinkers of prophetic import. He did violence again and again to Jewish scruples and prejudices. But deeper reason than these for saying he was not only a Jew is the unique kernel of his spiritual individuality, which gave a color to his thought and to his gestures of expression which, all subtractions made, still remains of that degree of originality shared only by the creative products of human genius of the very highest order.

But, even though it were possible to absorb the personal significance of Jesus in his Jewish ancestry and environment, his own particular contribution does not by any means constitute all of Christianity. His personal contribution does not even constitute all of that earliest intellectual development which is recorded in the chosen sacred books of Christianity, the New Testament of the

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[1] Tiberias, the capital built by Herod Antipas, was situated upon the place of an ancient burial ground, which made it impossible for strict Jews to inhabit the city, since contact with a grave caused a pollution lasting seven days. Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ,* I, ii, 19.

[2] Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land,* 425f.

[3] *Ibid.,* 432.

Christian Bible. And in these books precisely the two greatest thinkers (Paul and the unknown author of what is called the Gospel of St. John) were those most influenced by contemporary religion and philosophy prevalent in the centers of European population and thought. Afterwards Christianity, so soon crowded out of all but a little corner of Asia Minor, grew and developed within boundaries permeated with European civilization. So from the first, when Christians began to think about their faith, to relate and apply it in a broad way to life and to the world of conscious reasoning about life, the new religious message was turned clearly toward the larger current of religious aspiration in a Europe which was giving much thought to religious questions, seeking some sort of *salvation* in every corner of speculation or practice, despairing a great deal as to any ultimate rationality behind human existence, groping, often in blind and baffled superstition, toward some supernatural assistance with which to make existence more bearable in the present, and the hope of an after-existence more substantial and satisfactory.

Of all these things it will be necessary to say more hereafter. Here it is only important to suggest that Christianity became almost immediately European, and so it has continued, a vital, and even to-day not clearly a separable element of European civilization.

One might describe Europe, at least during the last twenty-five centuries, as that continent which has had the most history. Because of its climate, its geographical situation and conditions, the different races which have met and mixed there, various factors which can hardly be adequately estimated, things seem to have moved and changed more rapidly there than in any of the other continents. Human currents have crossed and recrossed each other, with frictions and reciprocal influences that have struck sparks of new experiment in act and in thought more often here, during this period, than anywhere else upon the globe. For this reason the pattern and texture of European civilization is extremely complicated. Of all these complexities Christianity forms an important part, for several of these centuries certainly the most important part—not only the reservoir of frustrated hopes and subconscious longings, the vehicle of natural, of unusual and of perverted emotional expression, but also the focal point, or at least one most important focal point, of political and social organization. We have spoken of its import for the intellectual world. In the field of economics it was of scarcely less influence. Its conceptions of the moral and religious significance of labor, differing to be sure, because borrowed sometimes from Genesis, again from the Book of Proverbs, from Jesus, or from Paul, were nevertheless always such as to help keep the humble toiler patiently at work. Its rich institutions, particularly monastic, planned at leisure and gathered together the resources for important collective endeavors, building not only churches and monastic dwelling places, but roads, buildings, dykes and irrigating ditches, bridges and warehouses; clearing forests and draining marshes for agriculture: in short many things which individuals could not and kings and nobles more often did not care to undertake.

Such undertakings can scarcely be called religious, yet they are a part of the story of Christianity. Indeed of all phenomena which make up the history of European civilization, there is perhaps none of so wide and so varied import as the miscellaneous collection that reveals what, at different times and under differing conditions, Christianity has been or aimed to be. In fact, when one has attempted to trace Christianity through the psychical, intellectual, social and political exigencies of these centuries of European history, he feels rather unsafe in attempting to say what religion is not, or cannot upon occasion strive to be. Is there indeed any type of religious experience or experiment which has not in some way woven itself into Christian history?

When this bewildering variety has been observed we can only be the more impressed by the very solid thread of continuity nevertheless preserved. This continuity is not entirely explained by the fact that there still is an institution, a Church, which claims to be the very organized community of Christians founded by the immediate disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. It is perhaps even more to be explained by two other and more fundamental circumstances.

Of these the first is the tremendous breach that exists between the ancient classical civilization and its successor during more than five centuries of comparative chaos. This long breach, because of the coherence attained by Christianity before the dissolution had far proceeded, made it possible to impregnate the entire emerging civilization with certain religious conceptions, and with an emotional color resulting from them. Despite the vitality of the classical inheritance of ideas, traditions of law, polity and literature never altogether lost, all things of the spirit were made new, and Christianity was everywhere present at the making. So deeply did it enter into the slowly evolving emotional, ethical, intellectual and political complex, so universally did it adapt itself to still fluid conditions while ineradicably molding them, that it seems difficult to conceive how anything but another somewhat comparable period of social chaos could uproot Christianity from our social subsoil and from our still deeper psychic habit.

It is upon this remarkable historical circumstance, first of all, that the doctrinal and institutional stability of Christianity has been able so long and so substantially to rest.

The second important factor in explaining the consistent continuity of Christianity is of such great importance that it is more difficult to measure. This second factor is the peculiar vitality of the Personality which the gospel narratives of the New Testament have passed on to us. This personality of Jesus, the gentle prophet of Nazareth, stands out with clarity and winning charm, despite tendencies to distort the picture, in the interest of religious hopes, theological preconceptions and the purposes of propaganda. Certain human elements in the personality of this Jesus, the simple assurance with which his words of solace are expressed, the direct way in which they speak to the deepest longings of distressed mankind, his sympathy for frailty and frustrated impulse, his scorn of and his deep perception of sham, his unmasking of semiconscious hypocrisy, the irony with which he exposed moral smugness and mechanical piety, the spontaneous beauty of his acts of love and sympathy, have always acted sooner or later as a corrective against the most extravagant vagaries of the religious consciousness. Even theology, when it has erected above this human personality a supramundal personage, can never quite forget how the attention of the worshiper may turn aside to contemplate not the deity but the more comprehensible human pattern which the theological Personality aims to adorn; so it must, in considerable measure, frame its god accordingly.

We shall see, in this story of Christianity, the Christ portrayed in many different forms, but we shall note how religious and theological interests do not effect a permanent obliteration of the distinguishing marks of a peculiar and particular human personality. Indeed it sometimes seems to-day that European civilization might more easily eliminate definite institutions of Christian worship than the personal influence of this Jesus, about the memory of whom Christianity first organized itself.

The story of Christianity is then, in a sense, a tale of how Christians have taken Jesus, his family and his followers, and made of them figures to respond to religious needs and interests of their own, following the inevitable urge of religious impulses through the framing of mythologies; virgins, saints and martyrs, who may be at one time saviors, at another avengers, at another intercessors or advocates before an unknowable, unapproachable deity, at still another confiding friends and helpful counselors, sometimes little better than wonder-working magicians or even gleeful or terrifying demons.

But the story is never one of variousness and vagaries only. As has been stated Christianity rather quickly organized its beliefs and institutions which, long before a new civilization had found itself, had hardened forms and definite interests and aims. Also, when books and reading became increasingly less restricted to a few monks and clerics and still fewer highly placed laymen of unusual intellectual ambition, there were the four gospel narratives presenting, with remarkable consistency, a single striking personality; and this personality, from the moment when these documents had won general acceptance by the Christian community, was fundamentally unchangeable.

So, as has been suggested by scattered statements above, there are three important factors to be kept in mind in the history of any religion of wide social significance. There are, first, a mass of desires, impulses, hopes and interests which instigate activities of a religious character. For the mass of any population these do not vary greatly from age to age. Economic interests affect them in an important way. Intellectual forces touch them much less deeply than is generally imagined. The farmer and the domestic slave, the banker and the mechanic will not put the same desire and emotion into his religion; but one intellectual will find a religion, another will scorn the suggestion that any may move him. Intellectual skepticism and intellectualized superstition generally go hand in hand through the same period. Just where there is most doubt of the supernatural there is, for some, the strongest impulse to find rest and solace in it. For religion looks beyond understood means of making desires effective. Hopes leap, with the enforcement of emotional stress, into the dark. Up to the present there have always been hopes or desires with no intellectual or social machinery for their realization, and always dark areas of the unknown toward which the hopeful might look for relief. Science is by no means a guarantee against the attitude and impulses of religion. Doubtless in the last decades there have been directed toward the unrolling of some evolutionary process of salvation many hopes more essentially prayerful than scientific.

The second important factor in a religion of wide social significance is the institutional factor, represented in Christianity by the Church, or churches. If the religious activities are to be unified, and the religious impulses are to be gathered together toward the effecting of ends thought desirable for the stability of a society, people must, in some sense, worship together the same sort of deity. At bottom it is a question whether religion does not tend to be individualistic to an extent dangerous to society. For example, behind religion lies the whole area of what has come to be distinguished from religion as *magic.* Magic is soon seen to be asocial; the devotee aims to get something done *for himself* by supernatural means which he believes he can persuade or force to come to his assistance. A man can quite easily be tempted to move such magic forces against his neighbor or his king, and organized society soon forces the magician to exercise his art in some hidden closet or the depths of a wood or cellar.

At the other end of the religious gamut is the desire for personal purity or salvation of some sort, again an individualistic motive at bottom. The religious hermit is the extreme of this type, but all monasticism tends in this direction. Spiritual pride is perhaps the sin which lies closest the heart of the very observant monk, and of which the most conscientious are most often fearful. On the wall of his own cell at San Marco in Florence, Fra Angelico chose to depict the betraying kiss of Judas Iscariot, as a warning to himself, one may easily suspect, against the sin of spiritual egotism.

Such tendencies may be corrected by the ethical idealism which becomes a part of the higher religions, but every organized society learns how unsafe it is to trust unaided ethical idealism. The most effective socialization of religious impulses comes through organized common worship under the control of a regular religious organization, with its established ritual and its recognized priests. States, or smaller and simpler social units, have always interested themselves to regulate and control religious activities. Even the secularized political nations of to-day, under political or social stress, cannot remain indifferent to religious motivation. We shall see how Protestantism was soon made to serve the emerging modern type of nationalism. The first care of the organized Roman State seems to have been the organization of religion.[4] Pisistratus in Greece, Constantine the Great, Charlemagne, Napoleon, all saw the necessity of a religious *concordat* of some type.

The third important factor is the prophetic. The oldest forms of religion either did not have, or more probably forgot the personality of their prophets, but three religions, risen within times of history, owe their names to the prophets which inspired them: Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism.

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[4] The so-called Calendar of Numa, which regulated the state religion of Rome, was assigned by legend to the first of the legendary kings. It shows a conscious effort to eliminate magic practices.

The prophetic religions gain from the individualities of their founders a certain emotional color, certain metaphysical tendencies, a degree of fixity in their ethical aims. It would seem that no other religions, except Judaism, at least during the last twenty-five centuries, have the vitality of those derived from a single prophetic personality. This may be due to the definiteness given them by the personality of their single inspirer.[5]

In this story of Christianity we will see, almost everywhere, these three factors at work. We shall deal with all those dreams, impulses, and activities instinctive to mankind which are tinged by religion. We shall also deal with all those purposes and interests of institutions, of hierarchies and officials, for whom their particular religion furnishes a lever of influence and power and the only sufficient reason for existence. We shall deal with the influence of a particular personality—a personality intricate and perplexing beyond most unusually inspiring personalities, because it has become for a considerable portion of mankind something not altogether or merely human.

But the Christian Saga, the vast drama of Christendom's adventure with its Christianity, is something even broader than this. It is also the story of the groping of millions of perplexed mankind, among various and always changing conditions, with differing hopes and intellectual formulæ, misled often by religious leadership which exploited their hopes and trust, after larger and more satisfying life. It is a tale of mankind, many millions in a vast area of time and space, seeking salvation in this terror and disappointment-breeding world, and aiming, here or hereafter, to envision a more heartening existence. It is a drama in which the highest aspirations, the most complicated hypocrisies, the pettiest selfishnesses, are being repeatedly thrown in contrast one against the other, or mingled inextricably within a single personality. One cannot hope to comprehend the fullness of such a stupendous plot; but to erect oneself above the struggle with Jovean superiority, to dismiss it as pitful error or unintelligent superstition, can hardly be more than an unconscious confession that one has never attempted to comprehend it.

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[5] The unity of Judaism, perhaps most remarkable of all, appears to be due not to any one prophet, and perhaps most of all to the peculiar racial history of the Jews.

# II

Observe the heavenly signs of the moon and the constellations, which way is wending Saturn's frosty star, into what circles of the sky strays Mercury. Before all else do honor to the gods, render great Ceres yearly her devotion with sacrifice amid the smiling green, when latest winter declines and fair springtime's at hand. Then lambs are fat, then wine is mellowest, sweet then is sleep, and thick on the mountains the shadows. Let all your adult country-folk now do worship to Ceres; for her with milk and soft wine wash the honeycomb, and three times around the new crops let pass the fructifying sacrifice, while all the neighbors in a festal band attend behind exulting, calling with clamor Ceres to their dwellings. Nor anyone put sickle to the ripened corn ere, with an oaken wreath, he crown his temples for Ceres, join in her artless measures of the dance, and chant her hymns.[1]

So religion in the countryside, at the time of the Emperor Augustus, is pictured by one of the most urbane and cultivated gentlemen of the time. The picture is probably more idyllic than realistic. The poem in which it occurs was inspired by one written eight centuries earlier, and is also a literary work of the most studied and polished style. The picture is even perhaps in a measure propaganda, since Virgil was early interested by the Emperor in his attempted religious revival. But it serves for all this even better to introduce the subject of the religious background of Christianity at its birth.

It does so first by calling attention, in the quoted passage, to a type of religious ritual with which Christianity had for centuries to reckon, with which indeed in many places it still has to reckon.

But by very reason of its backward look to Hesiod, and its sophisticated polished style, it does something more than this, particularly as we read farther in the poem. Almost immediately we are told that *The Father,* who is Jupiter, but hardly any longer the Jupiter given to disturbing his wife Juno by his amours, decrees all the various signs by which men are assisted to foresee those changes of the weather so important to the farmer.[2] So it would immediately seem that perhaps Ceres was not so important as might be gathered from the number of times her name is mentioned in the quoted passage. Virgil doubtless found Ceres a winning and picturesque figure, a symbol of beauty, and one well commended to the less intelligent farmer folk. As for himself, somewhat regretfully perhaps, he thought of his Jupiter as too monotheistic to so apportion his reign. Philosophy had long since exploded the old myths. Not so very many years before, a Roman Pontifex Maximus, the head of the state religion, had said that there were three religions, that of the poets, that of the philosophers, and that of the statesman, and that the last must be kept alive, whether true or not.[3]

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[1] Virgil, *Georgics,* I, 335-350.

But, reading still further, we are again surprised. Birds and other animals foretell the changes of the weather not because of any *wisdom from on high,* which makes of them prophets, but rather because they sense, more quickly than we, atmospheric changes which forerun the clearing or the storm.[4]

We have then, in this poem which was written not half a century before the birth of Jesus, four rather clearly marked strata of thought, three of which are religious, one which might be called scientific. We have religion trying to *effect* something, more particularly in the matter of the food supply; we have religion in that form of which we read much in handbooks of classical mythology, still dear to the poets in the time of Virgil; we have religion developed toward monotheism by the philosophers; and finally an attitude which is at its basis destructive of most of the religion of the other types.

This should give us some idea both as to the complication and the sophistication of the religious background in the world into which Christianity was born, and we shall understand that world better if we pass these strata in rapid review.

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[2] *Ibid.,* 351ff.

[3] Fowler, *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero,* 323.

[4] *Georgics,* I, 415f.

To broaden out from the hint given us by Virgil's poem, we may first consider the religion of the common man, which is at the same time the only religion which interests the statesman.

The statesman's attempt to regulate the religion of the common man was difficult in the lifetime of Virgil. The auguries were regularly taken, the principal sacrifices of the state religion were still regularly celebrated, but popular interest must have lagged, since Augustus had to restore eighty-two temples in his attempt at religious reform, and Cicero tells of thefts of statues and other temple property.[5]

The common man had, however, his religion, upon which the state hardly laid a hand. It was centered about two things, the family life and the food supply.

In the religion of the family, it has been said, the boundary line between superstition and religion vanishes, and to mark periods or epochs is a vain task.[6] The religion of the family is the religion of the household hearth, the religion of the household inclosure, a religion upon which no state would quite safely lay its hand, and which changes scarcely at all from century to century.

In his work on the Ancient City, at the beginning of that portion devoted to the family, Fustel de Coulanges wrote:

> If we transport ourselves in thought into the midst of the ancient generations of mankind, we find in each household an altar, and about this altar we find the family assembled. Each morning they gathered to address their early prayers to this hearth-fire, again each evening as the last act of the day. During the day they assembled near it for the meal which they piously shared, after prayer and libation.
>
> Outside the house, quite near in a neighboring field is a tomb; the family's second abode. There lie together several generations of ancestors; death has not separated them. They remain together in that second existence, continuing to form an indissoluble family.[7]

The spirit of the hearth fire, *Vesta* to the Romans, was the central figure of the family religion. In a sense the hearth fire constituted the family. An old Greek word for the family seems to mean *those who gather about the hearth fire;*[8] the household, inclusive of slaves or servants. Then there were the *lares* and *penates,* the guardian spirits of the family land and of the family store chest. Finally there was that mysterious vital force which, passing from generation to generation as the procreative power of the head of the family (*paterfamilias*), made of the family a single spiritual entity.

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[5] Fowler, *Social Life in Rome, etc.*, 321.

[6] Aust, *Religion der Römer*, 212.

[7] Eustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, ii. chap. i.

[8] De Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, 41.

This religion had no priests, no temples. Each family was a unit separate from all the others. The head of the family was the sole priest, the hearth and the boundary marks of the land the sole shrines. Cato, in his treatise on agriculture, reminds the housekeeper in the rural manor that "the master practices religion for the entire household." [9]

The religion which he practiced was intended to keep evil, whether famine, pestilence, or misfortune, from the family doorstep. It surrounded with its ceremonies, not only the day's beginning and end, the family meal, but all the important moments of the life of individuals within the household group: birth, marriage, death, for example. For such moments religion must always prepare. They are solemn passages from one state into another at which the gods must be present. The consideration of the nature of the spirits and ceremonies which surrounded this family religion is beyond our purpose. We must however realize that such household religious needs were taken care of before Christianity entered the field, and that the earlier tradition of household worship, so deeply intrenched in the family life, was by no means easily displaced by the ceremonies which grew up in Christianity to provide for similar needs.

When the proper religious steps have been taken to protect the family domicile and its adjoining plot of land, the next religious precaution of the family group is naturally the safeguarding of its food supply. The primitive group is acutely aware of its dependence upon mysterious forces which, in the cycle of the seasons and the changes of the weather, preserve or destroy their entire material existence.

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[9] *Roman Farm Management,* 36. A translation of the treatises of Cato and Varro.

The material collected tempts one to say that everywhere among primitive groups, and even to-day,[10] this dependence upon climate and weather brings about ceremonial acts which aim to have a favorable effect upon the procreation of domesticated animals and the flourishing of vegetation products. Often these rituals seem to lack the psychological attitude we think of as religious. The idea behind them seems often to be a sort of compulsion: if the ceremonial is properly performed the hunter will find game, rain will fall, the grain will grow long stalks and heavy seed heads. This attitude we call to-day magic. In India it was reduced to a sort of syllogism: "The whole universe is subject to the gods, the gods are subject to the spells, the spells are subject to the Brahmans; therefore the Brahmans are our gods."[11]

It may be doubted that such deadly logic truly represents the mental attitude in such primitive ceremonies. The forces called upon for help are too mysterious, not so simply handled.[12] In fact the attitude is hardly definable, in large measure because no attempt to define it was made by the devotee.[13] There is doubtless a primitive religious attitude not properly either magic or religion, as we would to-day define the two. This scarcely definable attitude is by no means entirely absent from contemporary life. Christianity has touched, but by no means banished it. A simple uneducated peasant may not go the length of believing it possible to coerce the Christian God, but he may, and often does vaguely believe, that in a Mass, or in a properly recited prayer, there is some mysterious effectiveness which will make of it the forerunner of a desired effect.[14]

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[10] "Louisiana planters, facing another year of drought, have decided to rely once more upon the prayers of Christians and the nocturnal rites of voodoo doctors to bring rain, rather than spend their shrinking funds buying showers from Charles Hatfield." Quoted in *The American Mercury* of July, 1925.

[11] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 51, one volume ed. *The Magic Art*, I, 226, in complete ed.

[12] R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* is an excellent discussion from modern viewpoint of primitive religious phenomena and psychology.

[13] Levy-Bruhl, *Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inferieures.* See particularly early chapters.

[14] Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, builds upon the theory that magic is the forerunner of religion, the former being gradually superseded because it must in time be recognized that magic formulas are by no means always effective of ends desired.

Indeed beliefs and practices grown about the cycle of physical existence, providing by supernatural means against its mischances, might be called fundamental religion.[15] In the cities, where Christianity had its first success, among slaves with no continuity of family life, or intellectuals groping after a satisfactory spiritual basis for human hopes, neither the religion of the family nor that of the vegetation cycle had the strong hold upon the imagination or habit of those it aimed to convert which such rites long continued to exert among the more scattered populations of village and rural manor. The fight here was a long one, not won without great concessions being made upon the part of the conquering religion, particularly with respect to the vegetation ceremonies. In order to comprehend its task it will be worth our while to consider briefly some beliefs and practices of pre-Christian Europe which fall within this latter category.

When one begins to trace back the history of the Olympian gods it is hardly unsafe to say that in every case we find them somewhere connected with the cycle of physical existence or its subsistent dependence upon the vegetation cycle. However, long before Christianity entered the field most of these deities had been elevated to a far different sphere of religious thought. But there were humbler deities, less august ceremonials, which were far less easy to dislodge. We are told that the early Roman religion mirrors a community engaged in agriculture and the raising of domestic animals, living laborious lives of constant struggle against the forces of nature.[16] The picture of agricultural life presented in *Works and Days* by the Greek poet Hesiod was hardly less applicable to Roman life than Greek, hardly less to the first Christian century than to the ninth century before Christ. Many of the same practices, but thinly disguised, are still maintained in Catholic Italy to-day.[17] In Macedonia the peasantry still measure time by a calendar in which the months are more usually called by names taken from the type of agricultural labor, or by some important religious festival, which marks the month.[18] Until science definitely enters, agricultural problems change scarcely at all from century to century; only perhaps in this, that life becomes just a little less precarious. "They were in fear of wild beasts; they were helpless against floods, helpless against pestilences. Their food depended upon one tiny plot of ground; and if the Savior was not reborn with the spring, they slowly and miserably died."[19] Gilbert Murray thus speaks of an earlier period; but a similar condition existed throughout much of Russia right up to the present; in India before the overlordship of the British. Things could have been but little better in the early Christian centuries.

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[15] The Brahmans classified sacrifices under two heads; 1. periodic, 2. occasional. The first class included the daily household sacrifices, those at the important phases of the moon, the first of the year, harvest time, etc. The other class was of ceremonies practiced on such occasions as birth, puberty, marriage, etc. Hubert et Mauss, *Mélanges d'Histoire des Religions,* 17.

[16] Wissova, *Religion und Kultus der Römer,* 23.

Is it then to be wondered that the largest part by far of the religious life of the agricultural class, which meant everybody except the dwellers in large cities, was given over to the lighting of bonfires at the summer solstice, to help keep the sun alight until the following spring, to dragging sacrificial offerings about the plowed field, leaping to help the grain grow tall, driving evil spirits from the home, aiming always to propitiate forces which, however pathetically ineffective the attempts to influence them, were certainly able to determine almost their entire well-being?

It is hardly necessary to say that Christianity never dislodged ceremonies so motivated. The best that any religion could do was to adopt them, and to adapt itself to them. Where they are dislodged or become obsolete it is because of other things than religion.

Simple rural communities, whose religion is in ordinary times but a means of assuring their daily or seasonal existence, feel no need of and have no way of maintaining a priest with leisure to think about the religion he practices. But for various reasons some places may become so sacred as to call for more continued ceremony, and someone must be set to care for them. The task of caring for and watching a sacred shrine between times of ceremony leaves ample time to think about why the particular place should be sacred. It is moreover worth while to try and think up a good reason, since without one the place might lose the attention of worshipers and the post of watcher might become a useless luxury no longer to be maintained at the expense of the devotees. So about shrines myths grow up, explanations of religious practices which the farmer, in his laborious harried existence, found neither time nor inclination to formulate.

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[17] Fowler, *Religious Experience of the Roman People,* 25.
[18] Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore,* II.
[19] Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion,* 49.

Moreover, as soon as enough persons have found a way, peaceable or otherwise, to persuade the husbandman to divide with them any surplus of food he may manage to raise, urban life begins. Ancient civilization, long before Christianity's birth, was surprisingly urban. The Greek states of the classical period were in theory always cities. The imperialism of Alexander, which so much changed the complexion of the Hellenic world, was always obliged to keep this theory in mind.[20] So too the Roman Empire never ceased to be, in theory, a federation of cities grouped about the most powerful.[21]

City dwellers soon forget whence comes the food which keeps them alive. So the mysterious life-force may disconnect itself from the vegetation cycle, but it does not cease to cause anxiety and to exercise the imagination. There is more exchange of ideas in the city, more leisure for talk and for thought. The life-force or forces seek embodiment and symbol.

Such they had found among the city dwellers of the Mediterranean basin long before even the Aryan invaders entered Greece and Italy. Bulls, perhaps because of their obvious strength and virility, the wild ungoverned fury of their rage, and swine, the most conspicuously prolific among domestic animals, became in a special sense sacred embodiments of the life-force.[22] Aphrodite and Priapus were well-known embodiments, which however, with advancing civilization, attached themselves rather to license and luxury than to life.

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[20] Jouget, *L'Imperialism Macédonien et l'Hellenisation de l'Orient.* Following the citations of the index under *cite* this may be clearly and strikingly observed.

[21] Lot, *La Fin du Monde Antique et le Début du Moyen Age,* 258.

[22] Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion,* 33.

But that embodiment of this mysterious force which seems to have got and kept the strongest hold upon the popular imagination was the serpent. Long after the classical period, when the Olympian Gods had become figures to exercise the skill and imagination of artists, serpents were commonly represented upon Greek tombs.[23] In the ancient hospitals, the Hieron at Epidauros, the Æsculapion at Athens, the serpent was one of the most important instruments in bringing about a return to health. A number were kept within the temple inclosure, for these early hospitals were temples to the god Æsculapius. "The sick were delighted and encouraged when one of these creatures approached them, and were in the habit of feeding them with cakes. The serpents seem to have been trained to lick with their forked tongue any ailing part." [24]

This reverence for the serpent was slow in dying. In the third century Christianity was forced to denounce in many eloquent passages a religion which was a serpent worship, and is described as one of the most widely spread and interesting among the early rivals of Christianity.[25]

Springs, where the water so necessary to life came rushing mysteriously from underground, the imagined locus of all mysterious life-forces, were sacred all over Europe. Trees, particularly tall and conspicuous ones, might be found objects of worship everywhere, when one parted from the Mediterranean shores to enter the forests which abounded in France, Germany and the upper part of the Balkan Peninsula. The primitive worship of Zeus had evidently been closely connected with them. When Christianity penetrated the inner portions of Europe it was obliged to struggle long with tree and fountain cults.

Divination was also, it is safe to say, part of the religious background everywhere that Christianity penetrated.

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[23] Percy Gardner, *Sculptured Tombs of Hellas*, gives many examples.

[24] Caton, *The Temples and Ritual of Asklepios*, 29. This explains the two serpents wound about a staff, still the symbol of medicine.

[25] Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, II, 25.

Divination is an attempt to gain knowledge as to future events, and as devotees are likely to credit the deity they worship with power to shape or foreknow the future, it readily becomes part of any cult. There are nevertheless types of divination of which the religious connotations are as difficult to trace as it would be to find them in modern fortune telling with a pack of playing cards.

The three civilizations which had most to do with the early formation of Christianity had all met and taken a stand with respect to divination. Hebrew religion appears to have passed through a period when many forms were practiced, into a settled official conclusion that the only proper and authoritative foreknowledge was that vouchsafed by Jehovah to his chosen prophets. As all those who claimed to be prophets were not always of harmonious opinion, there are in the Hebrew Scriptures marks of many contests between *true* and *lying prophets,* but in the early religious reform of the seventh century B.C. "users of divination, observers of times, enchanters, sorcerers, workers of charms, those who consulted familiar spirits, wizards, necromancers," and those who resorted to them, were condemned.[26] This does not however mean that the Jews ceased to be curious about the future, or to attempt to fathom its secrets in strange and forbidden ways.

The Greeks, imaginative and susceptible, in their period of decadence commonly practiced all sorts of divination, but for a time miscellaneous divining methods were in a measure driven underground. A few oracles, above all that at Delphi, enjoyed official and respectable confidence; but divination in general was considered fallacious and unintelligent. Nevertheless, from the time of Plato, whose theories of *inspiration* were at bottom a belief that in certain moments and states human beings came into spiritual contact with the divine, dreams, trance, even alcoholic excitation, might be believed to open human eyes to superhuman wisdom and foreknowledge. From this time the most intelligent Greeks became continually more and more tolerant of divination.

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[26] Deuteronomy XVIII. 10-12. This book, believed to be a document of religious reform, dating about 625 B.C., has other passages which condemn attempts to seek knowledge of the future in unauthorized ways.

As for the population as a whole, there can be little doubt but that all sorts of divining methods were resorted to in every period.

Romans were fairly modest in their official use of divination. The official *augurs* put upon the Immortals little more than the task of indicating whether or not a particular course of action, already decided upon, was favorably received. As for private divination, there was a general feeling that it was imprudent, even impious, to aim to discover what the gods kept secret. But here again, there is little doubt as to the prevalence of many practices, the number of which grew as the early centuries of Christianity were reached.

Such was the inherited environment of Christianity, as to practices of divination, and the Church aimed to abide by the better theories of these peoples. Within the apostolic circle dreams, visions, trance, and spiritual possession were admitted, and through such intermediaries as Paul, Peter and Stephen, God might reveal the future. Verbal inspiration came of course later, with the growing authority of certain writings. In general divination was frowned upon, but certain types were often used: such, for example, as casting lots. Even Augustine, at an important moment of his life, might aim to discover the will of God by opening his Bible at random, and deciding by interpretation of the first verse upon which his eye fastened.

When Christianity penetrated farther into Europe it left behind the better traditions of the old civilizations, and the discipline of the Church relaxed; the general tendency being, not so much to decry divination as to discriminate between knowledge of which the revealing source was God, through some accredited agency of person, and that of which the ultimate source was Satan.

As has been said, with these simpler cruder types of religious practice Christianity had most difficulty. Those to which we now turn seem of greater dignity; but, being closer to the currents of thought among the educated classes, speculation had been busy with them for centuries before Christianity entered the field. The religious impulse with which they had been born had long since passed; so too the æsthetic *élan* in which they had attained beauty and clarity of form, and the political interests which had fostered their worship. We cannot however pass them without some words, for these august personages are none less than the Olympian Gods themselves, who for many have so long stood as synonymous with Greek and Roman religion.

Herodotus, the Greek historian born some time after 500 B.C. says that "Hesiod and Homer . . . have given to the gods their titles and distinguished their several provinces and special powers, and marked their forms."[27] Hesiod and Homer were neither priests, prophets, nor philosophers. They were poets, both of them. Of course they did not invent the gods and goddesses. Men had worshiped Zeus, Apollo, Hera, Artemis, Aphrodite, Hermes, and the Roman deities assimilated to them during the period when Romans were in everything imitating the Greeks, centuries before Homer and Hesiod. What the poets of the schools for which these two names stand had done was to make of these figures more *human* deities, of whom poets could tell picturesque tales, and whom sculpture could portray in marble.

But the gods soon died of the process which made them too much like human beings—only immortal, of a little greater power, and often with more ungovernable passions. Even Homer does not always treat them as seriously as deities should be treated. He mocks Hephaistus limping about Olympus, Aphrodite fleeing before an arrow's scratch. Zeus and Hera quarrel in quite too pettishly human fashion. Long before Christianity philosophy had riddled their sanctity. In Greece and at Rome people questioned their existence, some concluding that, even though they might exist, in their feasting on Olympus they gave no thought to, had no care for mankind. Others formulated theories as to how they had come to be reverenced, concluding that they had originated in quite human guise—long dead heroes remembered for some service rendered to mankind. Philosophers applied to them their own ethical ideals and found their morals dreadfully lacking.

That which killed them as objects of real widespread religious devotion also served to keep them alive in another sense. Literature and art were packed with their stories and their figures. They inspired almost all the monuments of civilization, and so their figures passed from generation to generation. The educated person learned, one might almost say, his alphabet in conning the tales about them. Christian apologetic writers had much to say about them, because they too had been educated as pagans and had from youth absorbed their earliest imaginative material from the pagan mythology. Even through the fourth century, when Christianity was the recognized religion of the Roman Empire, there was no basis for education other than the pagan classics.[28]

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[27] Herodotus, *Histories,* ii, 53.

Both in Greece and Rome the political power had extended their lease of life, by making them the center of the recognized cult of the states. But by the time Christianity was born Greek political power no longer existed, and in the person of the emperor himself a new deity had been found as the central symbol of the Roman imperial religion. This Cult of the Emperor was of great importance to Christianity, as we shall see; but with the Olympian Gods Christianity was never to have any great difficulty. They lived on with a certain glory, won for them by the poets and other artists who had, from Homer on, done so much to surround them with beauty and make them stand as eternal symbols of certain human types. The popular imagination got from them a pleasure which was hardly one of intense religious devotion.

Indeed it is largely because of the widespread exaggeration of their importance to early Christianity that it seems necessary to devote so much attention to them here. The religious interests of the individual were elsewhere centered. Among the uneducated, and in the rural districts, there were the religions centering about the life-force and the vegetation cycle. There were other important currents, religions, philosophies and mixtures of the two, which occupied the minds of the educated and the thoughtful. Of these we shall say more in another chapter.

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[28] Gaston Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme,* I, ii, is a full treatment of the influence of pagan education upon Christianity.

## III

It is most probable that Christianity made many early converts, when it spread beyond Palestine, among the slaves and the unclassed of the big cities. However Nietzsche's influence, his treatment of Christian ethics as the moral of slaves, has on the whole exaggerated the preponderance of converts of the lowest social classes. Apart from the very evident literary culture of three New Testament writers, there are converts mentioned within these books who were clearly of considerable social position, and of such there were apparently enough who, as *patrons* or *patronesses,* with a particular Greek word to designate their class and function,[1] might with their greater influence and larger means care for the many more humbly placed.

Behind the little Epistle of Paul to Philemon lies the story of two converts, one the master of what was apparently an important household in Asia Minor, the other a runaway slave of that household converted while a fugitive in Rome. Early Christian tradition has many stories of mistress and slave united in their religious faith. The short prefatory phrases at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke and of the Acts of the Apostles were obviously addressed to a person of some social importance.

In short, Christianity was not launched upon a sea of inarticulate distress. The texture of much of the argument, of which the New Testament is full, shows that its development was not apart from or outside of the conscious thought currents of the cultivated world. It will therefore be of interest to summarize briefly its antecedents in the world of pre-Christian thought in Europe.

In fact one could not go far toward the understanding of any phase of European civilization without some comprehension of the scientific-humanistic temper of the Greeks out of which arose Greek philosophy. Philosophy means *devotion to knowledge.*

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[1] Moeller, *History of the Christian Church,* I, 64.

The Greeks coined the word, but they did not stop here. They went on to define the task. Aristotle, whose work is the comprehensive culmination of the independent methodical search after knowledge for its own sake in Greece, says, at the beginning of that treatise in which he seeks to lay down the fundamental intellectual problems:

> All men by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves, and above all others the sense of sight. For not only with a view to action, but even when we are not going to do anything, we prefer sight to almost everything else. The reason is that this, most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to light many differences between things.[2]

This interest in considering methodically the raw material of experienced facts, for the purpose of giving to men a rational unified comprehension of their world, was born among the Greeks of the sixth century B.C. It did not always exist conscious of its aim. Nor did it spring up haphazard among these remarkably intelligent people. It was preceded and accompanied by a fearless independent effort to analyze, not only what we think about, but the very ways in which we come to conclusions and the pitfalls of error which lie in our processes of thought. The movement was born in an era of unusual joy in life and self-confidence. Its influence waned when the era of self-confidence had passed. But it did not come to its temporary eclipse without having done much to affect the point of view with which religious problems were faced thereafter by educated and thoughtful people, nor without introducing its methods of ordered thought into the speculation and argument of religious thinkers.

As has already been suggested, this ardent scientific interest unseated the Olympian Gods, or one might perhaps better say it relegated them to their distant mountain peak of the imagination, showed them clearly as what they were—figments of the poetic fancy, symbolic representations of universal natural forces and of human ideal aspirations.

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[2] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* beginning of chapter I. (The work is quoted in the English translation of Smith and Ross.)

For these first Greek philosophers had sought to understand the *nature of things,* beginning with an attempt to discover the ultimate material basis of what we see about us, ending more generally with the conception of some sort of universal formative spiritual force which unified all motion and change, directing it toward some common comprehensive end.

Such speculation, whether ending in the conclusion that water, air, or perhaps fire, was the ultimate material basis of the universe; or whether seeking to find some unified purpose behind varied motions and manifold scattered efforts, tended away from polytheism and its many gods, all relatively impotent, toward the conception of one single God, or force, or mechanistic principle. So the religious influence was clearly toward monotheism. Zeus could no longer be a bearded potentate upon a throne, surrounded by other figures with whom his power was shared. The thoughtful educated person came more and more to see in this old Aryan God the spiritual moving principle of the universe, the source of the true, of the good, and of the beautiful, and the subordinant deities as merely imagined impersonations of certain important aspects of his omnipresence.

In the same spirit of inquiry, independent of customary or religious sanctions, ethical thought traversed a long period of examining the question of how happiness should be sought, and in what it consisted. Socrates, the great genius who first stands out as devoting the entire energy of his thought toward some positive solution of this problem, attacked conceptions founded upon custom and tradition quite as uncompromisingly as did the more destructive ethical speculators among his contemporaries. Questions of conduct were matters to be reasoned about methodically and freely, with care not to be entrapped by misty preconceptions. A tendency to make the inclinations and passions of each individual his particular measure of morality, common to some of his Sophist contemporaries, was not acceptable to him however. He believed in, and sought for, some more sure and objective standard of conduct, and looked to find it in organized society. With human beings differing in their qualities and abilities and society demanding of them different services, the excellence of each man, Socrates thought, was the effectiveness with which he performed his particular social function.

In order to serve well, and as a free human citizen of the community, knowledge was necessary. A man should have a clear idea of what he was about.

However Socrates was in search of a more general quality in right action than utilitarian effectiveness. He speaks of a *knowledge of the good* as the supreme ethical end. What was the good? It was more than a mere *good for something,* and yet Socrates never found a clear answer to the question. However the distinctive ethical ideal of Athens in the period of her glory was in the air, so to speak. Thucydides, a contemporary of Socrates, had already formulated it in practical terms, putting the words into the mouth of Pericles in the so often quoted Funeral Oration from his *History of the Peloponnesian War.* Here it is said that Athens is "a school of the Grecians, and that men here have, every one in particular, his person disposed to most diversity of actions, and yet all with grace and decency."[3]

So it is suggested that the ideal Greek should be a person capable in his particular business, while at the same time possessing a personality so roundly developed as to be able to take the part of a free citizen in a community sufficiently small for each free citizen to participate in all its varied political and social activities.

It is not yet clear however whether the citizen exists for the state or the state for the citizen. However Plato soon after developed the conception of the human personality as a spiritual entity, an independent being of which the *soul* was the lasting and precious element. Both for him and for his pupil and critic, Aristotle, the state existed for the moral development of the free[4] citizens, and in its ideal form should be suited to develop each individual human being to the highest point of his spiritual capacity. Happiness consisted in actions harmonious with such spiritual capacities.

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[3] Thucydides, *History,* II, 41. Quoted in the old translation of Thomas Hobbes.

[4] The word *free* is particularly important, for the Greek ethical thinkers lived in a society which took for granted the existence of slaves. Slaves could not participate in the ideal of human development for which this type of ethical thought stood.

Aristotle, in his *Ethics,* attempted, by a comprehensive analysis of types of conduct, to lay down principles for attaining happiness. It is beyond our purpose to consider this work, which stands as the classical expression of the humanistic ethical ideals of Athens particularly, and more generally of all Greece, at the moment when Greek civilization was tottering upon the summit of its achievement. However the *Ethics* of Aristotle cannot be read as a whole, and in the light of Greek history, without realizing that it serves very badly the person who does not feel a stable and favorable social-political environment behind him, so framed as to favor the free development of the individual. As has been said of both Plato and Aristotle, "Highly as they prized virtue, they did not exclude the view that for the complete happiness of man the favor of external fortune, health, prosperity, etc., are requisite also."[5]

The meteoric adventures of Alexander the Great, the rapid demolition of the empire he planned, the rise of a new Persian power in the East and of the Roman state in the West, left Hellenism with a very different place in the world, and the Hellenes with a very different situation to face, for which they must be prepared with a very different type of ethical ideal.[6] The historian Polybius, a Greek who for a considerable part of his career served the Roman state, part of the history of which he wrote, says at the beginning of that history, "The most instructive, or rather the only, method of learning to bear with dignity the vicissitudes of fortune, is to recall the catastrophes of others."[7] The Olympian gods, as compared both with those from whom they sprung and those who were to take their place, were bathed in sunlight.[8] So to a large extent was the ethical thought of Aristotle. Before 300 B.C. it had become necessary to find or frame a religion and an ethic, not for prosperity but for adversity; a religious hope and an ethical formula which pointed a way to be happy not with the assistance of, but in spite of, the environment.

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[5] Windelband, *History of Philosophy,* 164, Eng. trans.

[6] "The Empire of Alexander suppressed the old barbarian East and it suppressed the old free Hellas." Bevan, *The House of Seleucus,* I, 32.

[7] Polybius, I, i (Schuckburgh trans.)

[8] The Olympian Zeus of Phidias impressed those who looked upon it with the beauty and sweetness of the peaceful and benign god. Waldstein, *Essays on the Art of Phidias,* 70.

Judging by the way it spread and the type of persons it influenced, this situation was most satisfactorily met by Stoicism, which has been called, in its exalted passion, a religion; in that it made no pretense to magical powers or to supernatural knowledge, a philosophy.[9] Whether religion or philosophy it was shaped for and by times of adversity, of mental and social stress, to meet which it seems even to have been put together "hastily, violently," because some protecting wall against chaos had to be built.[10]

The character of Zeno, founder of Stoicism, had elements both of the dramatic and the picturesque. He was apparently a Semitic, a Phœnician of Cyprus, born of a mercantile family, who himself began life as a trader. As such, perhaps as the result of shipwreck, he landed in Athens, then as for centuries after the intellectual center of the Greek world. Into the currents of philosophical speculation he was immediately drawn, as he was also won to admiration of the already almost legendary figure of Socrates. He deserted the mercantile career planned, studied ardently under the important teachers of the time, and himself began to teach in 308 B.C., continuing to live and to teach in Athens for many, perhaps even for fifty-eight years.[11]

At Athens a *school* was neither a building nor a collection of buildings; it was just a master with pupils gathered about him. Each master was accustomed to meet these pupils at a particular place. Plato met his in a grove, Aristotle his in the covered walks of a garden where there was also a gymnasium. From these meeting places the schools were named. Zeno met his disciples in a columned portico, called in Greek *stoa,* which ran along one side of the Athenian market place. Hence his pupils were called *Stoics.*

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[9] Gilbert Murray, *The Stoic Philopohy,* 14. (Murray overstates his case, since it might be more properly said that they merely made more modest claims.)

[10] Bevan, *Stoics and Skeptics,* 32.

[11] The life of Zeno is surrounded with uncertainty and embroidered with legend. Bevan's book, quoted above, and Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy,* I, 187 (Eng. trans.) give the few known facts.

As has been said, Greek philosophy began with an interest in discovering first a material principle behind the varied forms of the physical world, followed by an explanation of movement and change. It rose to consider the more complex problem of the force which motivated growth toward particular forms in the animate world. Along the way it turned to investigate *man,* particularly two things of interest to him: how he could attain or maintain happiness, and how he could arrive at certitude when he thought.

Stoicism inherited all these problems and theories. It also inherited the growing lack of sureness in any of the hitherto offered solutions of the problems involved. Perhaps change was meaningless, without direction; continual flux, the inherent purposeless principle of things.[12] Perhaps happiness was attainable, if at all, only by the negative method of stripping one's needs to the minimum, refusing to bear the burdens or share the doubtful benefits of civilization, renouncing, so far as possible, even clothing, and living in the narrow security of a tub's shelter.[13] Perhaps it was impossible to know anything certainly. Some one of the various philosophers might somehow have gotten hold of the truth, or the way to discover it, but even were this so it was impossible to know which or to be certain that any of them ever had.[14]

Stoicism, with the enthusiastic simple ardor of a faith almost religious, drew together these problems, and faced them with a dogma. Motion, life, thought were all the expressions of a single spiritual principle which might be called God; a god who was essentially Providence, fitting, shaping, moving everything toward a single end. The Christian Paul was talking good Stoicism when he spoke to the Athenian philosophers of a god "in whom we live, and move, and have our being." [15]

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[12] The philosophy of Heraclitus may be thus, in too brief and general a way, summarized. Doubtless to many its total meaning was just this.

[13] A similar brief summary of the Cynic's point of view.

[14] So again for Skepticism. In *Marius the Epicurean,* chapter entitled "Conversation Not Imaginary," Pater adapts a dialogue of Lucian, which is a classic presentation of the Skeptic point of view.

This belief constituted the Stoic's armor against misfortune and uncertainty. Since the spiritual principle in man was essentially God, he could rest in certainty upon certain impressions strongly felt, so strongly felt as to demand acceptance, and leave no room for doubt. Upon these, with the assistance of logic, a body of reliable knowledge might be built. So, upon the intellectual side, the Stoic felt that he could, provided he lived the life of a sage and kept his sense perceptions pure, trust his reasoning powers.

But what he was still more interested in was conduct. How was a man to act who wished to achieve happiness? The end of man, the Stoic held, was virtue. So others before him had said. Even the Epicurean did not deny this, though making it means rather than end. Virtue, to the Stoic, was life in accordance with the law or purpose of the universe, which worked through and in everything, and was God. This force, sometimes conceived as a separable *guardian spirit,* was in man. If he willed, with dispassionate wisdom, to play his part, accept his fate, as part of the great scheme of things, he was more than happy. He was, as Gilbert Murray has said, "safe, inviolable, utterly free." [16]

Such a philosophy tended inevitably toward the religious. Zeno himself developed more than anyone had before, symbolical interpretations of the classical myths to show how they were at bottom symbolic presentations of moral ideas. Also the Stoics did not reject divination, considering it to be a way of communication between God and man.

It was when Stoicism had come to Rome, to make there such conspicuous converts as the poet-satirists Persius and Juvenal, the statesman and man-of-letters Seneca, most important of all the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, that Stoicism emphasized more and more its religious tendencies. Particularly was this true in the thought of the Greek Epictetus, brought a boy from Asiatic Greece to serve as a slave in the household of one of Nero's favorites.

The religion of Epictetus was religion of a certain sort; a religion of stern ethics and little else, which to an extent not always true of Stoicism turned its back upon worldly advantages. Epictetus felt himself always under the eye of God who, while directing the universe, was not too busy to note not only our acts but even our thoughts and plans. Even in darkness, which the Greeks never loved, we are never, he said, alone. We must resign ourselves to whatever comes, knowing that God directs it for good and that there is nothing evil in the world except a human will which aims toward ends which thwart His purposes. The good man, nobly wise, should aim above all to comprehend God's purpose in the universe, while practicing benevolence toward all his fellows.[17] There was however something chilling about the Stoic benevolence. The eyes of the Stoic, when turned from his deity, were concentrated upon himself. "Self cultivation and the divine blessing are the two things necessary."[18] He must help his fellow in every possible way while remaining at bottom indifferent as to whether his help succeeds. Pity for a suffering fellow was indeed a vice, since it disturbed the eternal calm at which the Stoic must always aim.[19]

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[15] Acts, XVII. 28.

[16] *Stoicism,* 28.

It is evident in the briefest review that, despite some differences, particularly in the ideal of charity, Stoic ethics approached closely those of Christianity in many respects. Seneca, the most polished literary exponent of Stoicism, is often quoted by early Christian writers, and there was a legend to the effect that he was secretly a Christian. It has been said that many chapter headings from Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* might serve equally well as titles in the essays of Seneca.[20] As late as the sixth century Boethis, a Christian, shows himself to be in thought more Stoic than anything else.[21]

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[17] The *Sayings of Epictetus,* recorded by the Greek historian and philosopher Arrian, are still the most popular exposition of Stoicism, and may be found in several English translations and many editions.

[18] Bigg, *The Church's Task in the Roman Empire,* Preface, xiii.

[19] Bevan, *Stoics and Skeptics,* 64f.

[20] Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius,* 331. (There are some such chapter headings, although Dill's statement would give an exaggerated idea of their number. The peculiarly Christian character of this work does however make even this small number more significant than they might be in another work.)

[21] The Reference is to a work well known in all the following centuries, *The Consolation of Philosophy,* written about 523 A.D. while Boethius was a solitary prisoner.

It is evident that a religion so coldly intellectual, an ethic so sternly moral, could by no means cover the entire field of religious interest and longing. It left almost entirely to one side the less patient longings of those who wished to be rid of the world in a single purifying bath, to feel themselves *converted* or *called* to salvation in a moment of emotional ecstasy, to be fed with the divine in a single, or at most in occasional material mouthfuls.

To satisfy such longings there was a type of religion older than Stoicism—several cults, which grew in popularity during all the centuries leading up to the conquest of Christianity. This was the religion of the *mysteries.*

The mystery religions centered originally about the vegetation cycle of which we have already spoken. However they soon attached to themselves the widespread desire to attain some security, some satisfying hope with which to fill the dark blank of existence after death. The Greek orator Isocrates, in the fourth century B.C., remarked that Demeter, the patron goddess of agriculture in the state religion of the Greeks, about whose worship the most sedate of these mystery religions grew, had brought two great benefits to the Greeks: agriculture, with which they had passed from savage to civilized existence, and initiation into the mysteries, which gave a solid hope of happiness for the life to come.[22]

Of such hope Homer and Hesiod, the founders of the Olympian religion, had little to give to ordinary mortals. All except a few heroes of an earlier mythological age were alike doomed to a thin colorless existence in the damp unpleasant halls of Hades.[23]

But in the seed, buried coldly underground to spring up anew as a plant, the worshipers of Demeter found a symbol of hope for life after death. The Christian Paul, in his famous passage on life after death, chose the same symbol.[24]

The myth about the mysteries of Demeter, celebrated at Eleusis and thence called Eleusinian, owes its completed form to a hymn to Demeter ascribed to Homer. It is one of the most charming of all Greek mythology.

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[22] Foucart, *Les Mystères d'Eleusis,* 48.
[23] Moore, *Religious Thought of Greeks,* 39.
[24] I Corinthians XV. 35ff.

This myth recounts how Persephone, impersonation of the seed of the corn and thus naturally the daughter of the goddess of the corn, was gathering flowers in a rich meadow. Suddenly the earth opened and Pluto, lord of the dead, appeared from the abyss to carry her off in his golden car to be his bride. The sorrowing mother, covering her yellow hair with a mourning veil, went everywhere seeking her daughter, until she learned from the Sun her fate. Angered, she then forsook Olympus, where she had dwelt with the other immortal gods, and took up her abode at Eleusis, sitting under an olive tree beside the Maiden's Well, where as an old woman she presented herself to the king's daughters who had come to draw water.

Remaining at Eleusis the goddess would no longer let the seed sprout. In vain the farmer plowed his hitherto fertile field; nothing would grow. All mankind would have perished had not Zeus commanded Pluto to restore Persephone to her mother. This Pluto did, taking first the precaution to give his stolen bride a pomegranate seed to eat, which insured him her return. The best thing that could be done was to arrange that she should spend two-thirds of her time with her mother above ground, the remaining one-third with her husband in Hades.

Rejoicing, the young bride returned to her mother and everywhere the grain began to sprout again. Then Demeter went again to Eleusis, showed the princes there how the curse had been removed, and instructed them as to the manner in which her mysteries were to be performed henceforth.

This myth became, as has been said, symbolic of the death and rebirth of the soul. The secret ceremonies of initiation were believed to assure to those initiated entrance into a happy life beyond the grave. These particular mysteries, called the Eleusinian, were taken under the supervision of the state, certainly before the eighth century had ended. They were conducted with a seriousness and dignity which profoundly impressed most of the distinguished Greeks, practically all of whom were initiates. But the Eleusinian mysteries hardly extended beyond Greece. However many Romans later became initiates, and at least two Roman emperors. Indeed not until more than half a century after Christianity was recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire did these ceremonies cease to be performed,[25] and it may be said that not until 1801, when a mutilated statue, believed to be of Demeter and worshiped by the local inhabitants as St. Demetra, was removed to the British Museum did the worship of Demeter at Eleusis entirely cease.[26]

There was another mystery cult, based upon the myth of Dionysos, which was however more popular and more widely spread, and also as to the ceremonies attending which we are a little better informed.

According to the Dionysic myth, the god Dionysos was supposed to have been pursued by the Titans when they warred against Zeus. To escape them Dionysos took many different forms, finally that of a bull (that old incarnation of the life-force of which we have spoken) in which form he was torn to pieces and devoured by his pursuers. Not entirely, however, for Athena rescued the heart which she gave to Zeus. Zeus swallowed it, giving birth in consequence to a new Dionysos.

This story is crude enough, though it left, as may be seen, room for a belief in rebirth after death to grow around it.

But this form of the myth is not original. It was composed at a time when the significance of the death of the god was no longer exactly understood. It would seem that originally it had been, not the Titans, but the devotees of Dionysos themselves who tore in pieces the bull in which the god had taken refuge. These votaries rent and devoured the god in order that they might themselves partake of the spirit of the god in eating his flesh and drinking his blood.[27] There may even have been a time when

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[25] The sanctuary at Eleusis was destroyed in 396 A.D., either by Alaric or by Christian monks who followed in his train. Moore, *Religious Thought of Greeks,* 66; Macchieri, *Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii,* 11.

[26] Moore, *Religious Thought of Greeks,* 66.

[27] Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States,* V, 171.

Dionysos had not yet taken refuge in the form of a bull, but when instead the votaries had devoured a priest who took the place of the god in the ceremony.[28]

Human sacrifice could not long persist with advancing civilization. Some authorities doubt that it ever existed among the Aryan conquerors of Greece. But there was another simpler way of "partaking of the god." Dionysos, though a general vegetation deity, was particularly the god of the vine, thence of wine. It is not only in ancient Greece and Rome that people have been able to feel as if possessed of some deity, at least for a few moments, with the assistance of Dionysos' gift to mankind. He also became patron diety of a certain sort of wild emotional music, probably because that sort of music was found to assist the general effect of Dionysiac exhaltation. So it was not the myth only which, in the death and rebirth of the god, gave to the devotees the hope of birth into a new life. Dancing to wild music, elated by the effect of the wine, they had a vivid personal experience of the new life themselves. The cult numbered women particularly among its devotees.

But it is not wine and dancing alone which can give rise to intense emotional states which favor hallucinatory experiences. Fasting and other ascetic practices are sometimes very potent in bringing about ecstasies favorable to religious fervor, and around the mysteries of the Dionysiac cult, called the *Orphic Mysteries* because according to legend Orpheus had first brought them to Athens, sects of ascetics grew up. Among many primitive peoples there is a belief in a soul, separable even in life from the body. The philosophy of the school of Plato, and the later development of this school called Neoplatonism, originated, in this type of belief, some basic philosophical conceptions which reacted upon religious thought. So, among some of the devotees of the mysteries, there grew up organized spiritual exercises intended to free the soul from the body, which in practice meant to prolong or make more frequent religious ecstasies.

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[28] Frazer, in *The Golden Bough,* has many references scattered through several volumes, devoted to ceremonies of this sort.

Just as there are revivalists among Christians to-day, who seek to promote such overemotional orgies, so there were many among the Orphic devotees who rejoiced to find opportunities for unhealthy emotional excitement in the ceremonies. However the Orphic rites were in theory purificatory, and despite the fact that the purity sought was ceremonial rather than moral, still many inevitably appreciated the emptiness of mere ceremonial baths and ecstatic experiences as a means of being born anew, of water and the spirit,[29] and were prepared to pray with the psalmist, "Make me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me."[30] Under the influence of a philosophic sect in southeastern Italy, called after a Greek mystic-philosopher Pythagoras, under the influence too of Stoicism—for one might be an initiate and a Stoic at the same time—Orphism on one side worked steadily toward higher standards of conduct and social morality.

It also worked in the direction of monotheism. In the developed Orphic theology Zeus and Dionysos were one single God.

Between the Orphic mysteries and early Christianity there were a number of similarities. Paul and the unknown author of the Gospel of St. John show themselves familiar both with Orphic terminology and with the Orphic type of thought. But to the Orphic ceremonies of initiation, of which something has been long known—and which can, since the discovery in 1910 of a villa arranged for initiation ceremonies on the outskirts of Pompeii, be fairly accurately reconstructed—some analogies in Christian ritual are so close as to suggest direct influence.

When this villa was unearthed, it was found that the entire circuit of the walls of one large room was decorated with friezes, which upon study were shown certainly to represent a ceremony of initiation.

The drama of initiation, the initiate being a woman, unrolls itself in the following scenes:

In the first scene the initiate covers her head with a veil; then, draped in the veil, she is catechized. The catechizing finished, the initiate partakes of a sacred meal as a result of which she is born again as Dionysos, represented allegorically in the fourth scene. These preliminary scenes lead up to the culminating moment, in which her destiny as an initiate is revealed. She is now the mystic bride of Dionysos, but has still to undergo her moment of suffering, represented by the figure Telete, the daughter of Dionysos, who is about to administer a whipping with a long rod to which a lash is attached. This finished, the initiate has been born again. The spirit of Dionysos has descended upon her. She dances in a frenzy of delight. The resurrection has taken place.[31]

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[29] St. John III. 3-6.

[30] Psalm LI. 10.

The symbolic interpretation of the tragedy of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, as developed by theology within the New Testament books, the ritual developed in the early community, the Pauline and Johannine interpretation of Christian conversion and salvation touch every act of this drama. It has been well said of a passage in the Book of Acts that describes how a young girl possessed of the "spirit of prophecy" cried out on seeing Paul and Silas, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you salvation," [32] that the listeners would have understood from her words that these missionaries initiated men and women into a sacred society of communion.[33] The various elements of such sacred societies, all indeed of the essential outer elements of these mysteries as well known in the contemporary world, became in one form or another elements of Christianity as it developed. As a matter of fact Christianity, as it emerged from Palestine having parted ways with Judaism, was not yet, from the standpoint of what religion was then expected to be in Europe, a religion at all. It was little more than a religious message, with a budding doctrine of salvation wrought particularly by Paul. Baptism of the type of John had been repudiated by Jesus, and baptism of the early Christian type had probably not yet been universally instituted. It is possible that the *laying*

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[31] This villa, worth seeing even for its picturesque situation, is easily accessible to the tourist at Pompeii who takes steps to inform himself. The fresco is described in a small handbook by a distinguished Italian scholar. Macchieri, *The Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii.*

[32] Acts XVI. 17.

[33] Gardiner, *The Religious Experience of Saint Paul,* 82.

*on of hands* to impart the new spirit and the *sacred meal* of communion or thanksgiving were its only generally recognized ceremonies of ritual nature. There were neither temples, altars nor priests. On the other hand, leaders of the community, as all well-informed persons of the time, could hardly have lacked knowledge of the practices of the mystery religions. Moreover Christianity could have made but few converts, aside from Jews and others of the lowest class, without finding among them persons who had already been initiated to one or another of these mysteries. It was thus all but inevitable that these mysteries, more even than the developed ethical doctrines of Stoicism, should have come to play a considerable rôle in developing Christianity to a point where it met the general religious needs of the European world into which it entered.

One other element of the mysteries, as developed in Christianity, became important. These mystery religions were societies which took no account of national or racial boundary lines. Though this fact never grew to positive significance in the contemporary political world, they contributed to the cosmopolitanism which might prepare the soil for a religion which was destined to build up an organization which overleaped such boundary lines in a way of practical efficacy.

# IV

WHEN Gregory, Bishop of Tours in the sixth century, wrote his *History of the Franks,* he felt it appropriate to begin with the creation of the world, pass by way of Moses, David, Pontius Pilate and Constantine, reviewing the history of Jews and Christians, before mentioning the Frankish nation. So too, in the thirteenth century, when a Count of Flanders ordered written the history of his particular family, it was still thought proper to begin the family history with Adam and Eve.[1]

In such exaggerated examples one may see how greatly Christian historians have been influenced by the fact that certain sacred books of the Jewish people were included in the Bible of Christians.

Following a theory that the Bible represents in literary form a progressive divine revelation, based upon two covenants between God and Man, an old covenant of *law* and a new covenant of *love,* or grace, to use a technical Christian word, Christians have long accepted as perfectly natural the fact that the sacred books of a religion hostile to Christianity at its beginning, and treated with hostility by Christians during most Christian history, should form part of their own sacred volume.

Were this theory accepted in this story, it would have been proper to begin, as usually in historical reviews of Christianity, with the religion and history of the Jews, as told in the Old Testament, instead of, as has been done, considering at the beginning some important European antecedents of Christianity. In order to explain this departure from usual proceeding it will be of interest to examine briefly the reasons why these Old Testament stories became sacred to Christianity.

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[1] Gaston Paris, *Littérature Française au Moyen Age,* 152; 6th ed.

The theory of the two covenants is natural enough. In the Old Testament there are several accounts of covenants between Jehovah and the Jews or their leaders. The theory of the two covenants is also developed in the New Testament, particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The theory does not however primarily account for the inclusion of the Old Testament in the Bible. The theory is rather a by-product of the situation which forced Christian preachers to give much attention to these older books before there were any accepted Christian writings.

It has been said that the dependence of the New Testament upon the Old is more superficial than real, and that the older book was in some respects the main hindrance to Christianity at the beginning.[2] This was because, when Christianity first began to seek converts, it sought them among the Jews, among whom nothing could be accomplished unless they accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

The hope of the Messiah was characteristic of Jewish thought from early times, as an essential element of the religious consciousness of the literary prophets.[3] In the long contest between Elijah and his successor Elisha with the alien queen Jezebel, who dominated her husband in the religious sphere, religious thought in Judaism separated itself from the established line of kings, both in Judea and Samaria. Then the nationalistic hopes of the people, given voice in the first two literary prophets, Amos and Hosea, fastened themselves upon a divinely anointed king to come. The word Messiah meant *the anointed.*

Already in the preceding century, as shown in the poetry of Hesiod, the Greeks looked back to a long passed Golden Age, since when the world had become continually worse. On the contrary the Jewish prophets were always looking for a better age to come, when Jehovah should appoint them a king. Then they looked for moral purification of the nation, expected to see it unmolested and respected in its national existence by the nations

[2] Scott, *The Apologetic of the New Testament,* 230.

[3] Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ,* Div. II, Pt. II, 128f. Westphal, *Jehovah,* etc. Part IV, chap. iv, 312f. and Part V. Also Greentone, *The Messianic Idea in Jewish History.*

of the Gentile world, where the enemies of the Jews were either to be destroyed or forced to acknowledge the God of Israel and the virtues of his people, while the nation, under its divinely appointed king, was to prosper as never before, even in the days of Solomon.

So deep was the hold of this idea upon the imagination of the Jews that it grew with every change in the scope of their religious horizon, was altered with mutations in the fate of the nation which effected the national temper, deepened with all strengthening of Hebrew religious thought. Under the national misfortunes which came to the Jews when the moment of glory under the Maccabees gave place to Roman domination, the Messianic hopes particularly flourished and became often most extravagantly aspiring. Some visionaries saw the entire face of the world as it existed wiped out to prepare for a new world for the ruling of which a king, not merely anointed of Jehovah, but himself of divine origin, was to descend from the heavens.

The early career of Jesus undoubtedly raised, in the minds of many Jews, the question as to whether he was or was not this Messiah. In its earliest beginnings, a time in which the New Testament books which we know had for the most part not yet been written, the Christian community attempted to make good this claim. This could only be done by proving their claim from prophecies found in the Old Testament writings.

In the road of such proof there were many stumblingblocks. There was particularly, as Paul says, the crucifixion of Jesus.[4] The Messiah was expected to be a conquering hero, not a condemned criminal. He was expected to be of the family of King David, members of which were doubtless still living at Bethlehem and roundabout. But Jesus had come from Galilee, whence the true Jew expected little, as it was largely Gentile, and here even the Jews had been corrupted, from the Hebrew point of view, by Gentile associations.[5]

Out of these and other difficulties, which could only be overcome by careful study of the old written prophecies, and then only by ingenious and often far-fetched interpretation, arose the initial conflict between Christians and their unconverted Jewish coreligionists. Before the New Testament books had all been written Christianity had retired beaten from this controversy, had formulated its own conceptions as to the world significance of its founder, under the influence of Greek ideas, and had left Asia to intrench in Europe.

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[4] "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness." I Cor. I. 23.

[5] "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." John I. 46; VII. 53.

The conflict left its marks however. Christians had searched far and wide through the books of the Old Testament. Their study had made it in a sense a new book for Christianity, which had so largely been excerpted and interpreted for Christian purposes that the results of this study are everywhere present in the recognized Christian writings.[6]

The Old Testament writings were also of importance in presenting the claims of Jesus to non-Jews in the Mediterranean Basin. From very early times the Jews had been in a large measure a dispersed people. The Kingdom, the only period of glory to which the Jews might look back, and the memory of which tinged their Messianic hopes from Saul through the glory of Solomon to the fall of Samaria, lasted hardly more than three hundred and fifty years. After this those who claimed to be true sons of Jacob occupied but the city of Jerusalem and a few surrounding villages. Assyrian raiders had long had the habit of carrying off captives from the outlying regions of Judea and settling them in their own territory. Later it became a matter of political policy to carry off the leaders and so break the solidarity of this stubborn people. The Great Captivity, of the sixth century, was but one of several such incidents.

Also, in troublous times or for their economic advancement, Jews went into all the great centers of the Mediterranean Basin, as well as into the Mesopotamian Valley. Wherever they went they carried their religion, which had won some converts and not inconsiderable respect in many places.[7]

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[6] Toy, in the Preface to *Quotations in the New Testament* says that few Old Testament books are not quoted in the New, few important lines of thought that do not find some echo there.

[7] Jackson and Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity,* I, Part I, chapter entitled "The Dispersion."

It was therefore of advantage to connect the unknown Galilean Prophet with the better known Jewish God, when converts were sought beyond the pale of Judaism.[8]

These circumstances, met during a period when the Christians had yet no sacred books of their own, fastened the Old Testament upon the Christian Community. But Christian theology and Christian institutions were to follow a line of development not marked out by the influences of these Old Testament writings. Christianity grew by adapting itself to its European environment, and hence the Old Testament to its purposes. Large portions of it had only negative importance for Christianity. The historical books had a different significance than for the Jews. Strangest of all these adaptations is that of the Song of Solomon, a passionate love poem which served in the Middle Ages as a moral allegory, representing the mystic love existing between Christ and the Church; and monks devoted to celibate lives listened hour after hour to sermons based upon passages expressing the most sensuous amorous desire.[9]

There is, however, one element in the religious writings of the Jews which has had a very deep influence upon all that element of Christianity represented in individual piety and devotion. Indeed, if it may be said that the personal religious influence of Christianity, aside from its theology and its church polity could be divided into three parts, corresponding roughly to the three persons of the Christian Trinity, the devotion to God the Father may be said to be inspired by the Old Testament, that to God the Son by Jesus plus Greek theology, and that to God the Holy Spirit by the mystical element in Greek religion and later Greek philosophy.

It has been said that the religion of the Olympian Gods was largely a creation of their poets. Much the same may be said of that portion of the religion of the Hebrews which most influenced Christianity. There is however this great difference. The Greek poets shaped their gods with great freedom, and moved them about as figures in a supramundal drama. Vague potencies, hardly to be symbolized in human form, were shorn from them, that they might appear as glorified men and women. They were not supposed to be incomprehensible, or hardly more so than is human personality. It was of their very nature to be hewn out of marble, because immortality was their particular prerogative, and set up to be admired, and also to be judged.

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[8] Heffern, *Apologetic and Polemic in the New Testament,* chap. iv.

[9] Bernard of Clairvaux, inspirer of the Second Crusade, has sermons based upon the Song of Solomon, prepared for the monks of his cloister.

But if the Greek poets formed and moved their gods, the Hebrew poets may be said to have been formed and moved by their God. He could not be comprehended, therefore neither envisioned in form nor judged. His ways were past finding out. He hewed them to his form, thundered exhortations, pleadings, imprecations, threats. They were not *makers,* the etymological meaning of the word poet; they were speakers for God*, prophets.*

Nevertheless, with their very different attitude of approach, these prophetic poets, no less truly than did Homer and Hesiod for the Greeks, created for the Jews the moral character of Jehovah which, though it left some perplexing problems as to the meaning of human life with which Christianity had later to grapple with different theological conceptions, remains the sublimest strictly monotheistic religious conception the world has known. Indeed so well has it served Christians in their devotions, that they may recite the Psalms from beginning to end, for the most part quite untroubled by the fact that these Psalms know neither of the other two persons of the Christian Trinity.

It is clearly evident in the Old Testament that this Jehovah, or Jahweh, was not from the beginning worshiped or thought of as the one god of all the earth. What is perhaps the oldest name for God in the Old Testament has a plural form, and in one of the legendary stories of the patriarch Abraham the dieties who come to his assistance are plural. Later thought attributed to Moses the sacred name Jahweh, which came to be pronounced with other vowels for superstitious reasons, Jehovah; this name having been revealed to Moses in the incident of the burning bush.[10] It is however clear that the commandment to worship only Jehovah was not always understood to mean that there was no other god.

At the beginning Jehovah was the tribal, later the national god of the Hebrews, who led them into battle, and in whose name they conquered because Jehovah was more powerful than the gods of their foes.

While Jehovah was thus conceived as a national god it was to be expected that the Hebrew people should be his chosen. And it was in considering the relation of Jehovah to his people, as a whole and by no means as individuals, that the Jewish conception of God first developed.

Even the personal domestic tragedy of Hosea does not enlighten him as to the relation of Jehovah to individuals, but it is all taken as a symbol of the god's relation to his chosen people. The nation is therefore sometimes the wife of Jehovah.

For she never knew
That it was I who gave her
The corn and the new wine
And the oil,
I who in plenitude
Heaped up gold and silver for her.[11]

Again the people of Israel become the child of their God:

When Israel was a little child
I began to love him,
And out of Egypt
I called my son—
Yet I taught Epraim to walk,
I took them on my arms,
But they have never taken notice
How I have nursed them.
I guided them with the cords of a man,
With the reins of love;
I was to them
As he who raises up the yoke
To lighten the burden
Upon the oxen's jaws.[12]

It is easy to appropriate such tender metaphor for the comfort of individuals in their relationship to a fatherly deity, but this com-

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[10] Exodus III. 6.

[11] Hosea, II. 8.

[12] *Ibid.,* XI. 1-4.

fort was not within the intention of the prophet. Hosea wrote near the middle of the eighth century, and it was perhaps four centuries later when the Book of Job attempted to discover a solution of the problem of Jehovah's justice and love in his dealings with individuals.

But the conception of this people as the chosen of Jehovah fought its way with great difficulty, even as these Hebrew tribes did not, without hard fighting and many national reverses, maintain at all what was always a precarious national existence. Their religion was not, like that of the Olympians, born of conquest and triumph. In these vicissitudes many were always being tempted to turn aside, doubting the power of their national God, because success did not always come.

Some few however, instead of deserting, turned their searching thought upon the causes of these national vicissitudes, as does the author of the Book of Job upon the personal misfortunes of his hero. Believing still in Jehovah it was necessary to account for the fact that his chosen people might suffer and fail. It became clear that the purposes of Jehovah with respect to his chosen involved other nations. If other nations prospered at the expense of the Jews that could not be outside of the purpose of their God, unless it were that Jehovah was not strong enough to save them always.

It was out of this dilemma, born of the vicissitudes of the nation, that Jewish monotheism developed, a monotheism so different in all its coloring from that which arose from the metaphysical speculation of the Greeks. In Greece monotheism came as the result of an attempt to solve a problem predominantly intellectual. Greek philosophy generally abhorred a universe in which the apparent disorder of random motion and meaningless cross-purpose in action might be unified under a single fundamental conception of unity. Aristotle and the Stoics, from differing but closely related points of view, arrived at such a unifying deity. But this monotheism did not deeply touch, most often did not touch at all, the average mind or imagination, for which the universe might be as sloppy as it would, provided life could be made sufficiently tolerable, in actuality or in hope, to Number One. So that the average pagan sacrificed to whatever deity he believed could bring to him the greatest advantage at the moment, or he sought security after death through initiation to the mysteries.

The monotheism of the Hebrew prophets was arrived at in attempting to solve a moral, not an intellectual problem. In this moral problem at the first the individual did not count. The promises of Jehovah were for the Children of Abraham collectively, for the Clan of Jacob. In this attempt first of all the hereditary governors, the Kings, were thrown overboard, and the hope of the Messiah substituted. Then the efficacy of sacrifice and ceremony was thrown overboard. It was national righteousness, fidelity to Jehovah in thought and in act, which was required. Finally, when the nation had become hopelessly frustrated in its immediate nationalistic hopes, when its people were dispersed largely among strangers, living surrounded even in their own Promised Land with foreigners all about, the individual Jew began to ask questions about how things stood between himself personally and this God of his people.

Have pity upon me, O God,
To the measure of your lovingkindness;
To the large extent of your mercy
Blot out my oversteppings;
Wash me entirely of my guilt
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
My sins are ever confronting me—
Cleanse me with hyssop,
Then shall I be purified;
Wash me, and I shall be
More white than is the snow.[13]

Or again, in the still better known words of the Twenty-third Psalm, "Jehovah is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing."

It is true that, for the individual, Judaism long remained a religion of vague hope. The Book of Job offers but a misty solution to the problem it attacks, and in the end Egypt and Greece were called upon to bolster the comfort of the individual with the hope of immortality. Judaism remained however largely a religion for this world, while Christianity, introduced into a world which was seeking personal salvation through mystic communion with deathless gods, soon parted company with it; in theory sharply rejecting this world for the promises of another to come after death.

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[13] Psalm LI. 1-7.

However Jehovah had become a god for religion, rather than for speculation. The emotional reach of the prophetic longings was broader than their intentions when they gave expression to their sublimest utterances. Individual Christians could read such words as "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people!" and appropriate the comfort to their individual selves. The fully developed conception of Jehovah was richly adapted to the needs of Christianity, in the private devotions of Christians, particularly in Protestantism when the Bible came to be put generally into the hands of Christian worshipers.

Out of the growth of the sublime conception of Jehovah, as it developed in Old Testament Judaism, other ideas grew, two of which are so important to Christianity that we cannot pass them over here.

First, there was the faith in Jehovah which lasted and grew through periods of national disaster, which indeed particularly flourished at such times. What might have become to the early struggling Christian community, had they not had before them the conception of a fatherly God, who was loving even in his chastisements, and who did not desert his people in their distress? Individuals might rush into martyrdom, as some did, in order to embrace immediately the richer after-life. But the community needed a common hope, and appropriated to itself the place of the Chosen People, became in its thought the *remnant,* the chosen from among the chosen, appropriating all the prophetic promises given in the Old Testament to such.

Second, it was inevitable that, out of the sufferings of the Hebrew people, considered as discipline sent to them by their God for their punishment and their cleansing, there should arise the conception that there may be an element of moral good in suffering and even in oppression. Without this idea Jesus might have become completely what theology so largely made of him in his final suffering and sacrifice, a victim who in some almost mechanically atoning way, after the manner of old ideas of sacrifice, a dying god, who in dying passed on his life, as his blood, to his worshipers. With the assistance of the prophetic interpretations of the history of the Jews no theological dogma of Atonement can quite annihilate the purely moral lesson of the tragedy of Jesus; that suffering may work regeneration, and that failure is not essentially sacrifice, but may be a creative force.

# V

If the reader of the three chapters immediately preceding, having approached them with no already formed conception of their subject matter, leaves them with a somewhat jumbled and indiscriminate impression of many religious impulses, needs, activities and ideas; a moving sea out of which emerge the sparse heads of struggling swimmers, which hold as still somewhat settled points his recollection; if he further thinks of these remembered landmarks as the heads of swimmers struggling to be *saved,* any confusion in which he may have been left, despite attempt to set the material in some rational order, will perhaps serve to render his impression more in accord with the religious situation of Europe in the earliest period of Christianity.

The keynote of the situation, as already suggested, was the desire for salvation. It is doubtless significant of this state of mind that the title *savior* (sōtēr), reserved in the classic age of Greece for Zeus and a few important gods, became the title of two Greek kings of Egypt, and of several Roman emperors. The mystery gods were *saviors,* and the regeneration resulting from initiation was *salvation.*[1]

The search for salvation being so general, it is not surprising that the ideas as to what it meant to be saved should have been far from clear. As to the means of attaining salvation people were willing to try any prescription. From the time when the first Ptolemy, immediate successor of Alexander the Great in the rule of Egypt, set about to form a syncretic religion acceptable both to Egyptians and Greeks, the mingling of religions and religious ideas was altogether the common order of the day. As one example of this syncretic movement, the translation into Greek of the Hebrew Scriptures was fathered by a Greek king of Egypt. In the first century of the Christian Era such a scholarly person as Plutarch was willing to consider seriously the religious efficacy of almost any religious belief or practice whatsoever, and two centuries later Diocletian, while a declared follower and divine incarnation of Mithra, believed himself to be upholding the ancient religious institutions of Rome.

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[1] As Reizenstein quotes from Apuleius, ". . . denn das alte Leben ist abgelaufen; die Götter aber ruft von der Scwelle der Unterwelt den Würdigen und Verschweigenen zurück und verpflanzt ihn in ein neues Leben der σωτεϱία." *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen,* 39.

Into this world Christianity, so soon as it had stripped off its swaddling clothes and ceased to appear as a new and purified type of Judaism, went with the claim to be the one true religion for all mankind. Such a claim was already implied in a sense for Judaism, in their developed conception of Jehovah as the one God of all the earth, and toward the end of the sixth century B.C. the prophet Zechariah had written, "It shall come to pass that ten men, out of all the languages of the nations, shall take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for God is with you.[2] However Judaism had put on, particularly under Pharisaic influence, and to preserve the racial and religious integrity of the people, a veritable armor of protective customary law, to keep the Jew apart from other people; and in the six centuries following Zechariah few converts had been made.[3] Christians did not wait for others to recognize their claim to possession of the one true religion, take hold of their skirts, and ask to go with them. Barriers which made it difficult for strangers to become Jews were quickly broken down, they went out and plucked at the skirts of others, making converts throughout the Mediterranean Basin.

But in order that any religion might have at that time hoped to become a universal religion two circumstances were necessary, each of which, in the way peculiar to its genius, was furnished by one of the two great peoples who drew together that unity of civilization we know as the Ancient Classical World; namely Rome and Greece.

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[2] Zechariah VIII. 23.

[3] Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity,* I, lv.ff.

To make converts everywhere through this region it was necessary, first, that the missionary should be able to go with security where he wished to go, travel in reasonable safety the routes by land or sea, cross without too great complication the boundary lines of racial groups, have about him, in whatever place he might stop as a stranger the protection of some respected legal code and some courts of law from which an alien might hope for justice in case of difficulty. Second, if his preaching were to be of much avail, it was necessary that, wherever he went, at least some considerable number of persons should be able to understand what he had to say.

Reasonable security for travel or for sojourn in foreign countries was provided, during the early years of Christianity, by the governing policy of the Roman Empire. Augustus established and strongly protected the geographical boundaries of the Roman power. Within these boundaries everything possible was done to make passage from one portion of the Empire to another easy and safe, for trade or for travel. Under the theory that there were, in addition to the traditional and enacted laws of centuries of Roman legal history, certain natural principles of justice applicable to the relationships between persons everywhere, a body of law grew up which, while local legal customs and practices remained undisturbed within communities, might be applied in judging cases involving aliens or others outside the protection of the local statutes.

Not only might the missionary go with comparative safety throughout Asia Minor and eastward to the Mesopotamian Valley, to the southern part of Egypt, everywhere along the northern boundary of Africa, generally throughout Europe to the western banks of the Rhine and the Danube; but on the whole Rome was willing that he teach any religious doctrine he might wish, provided only that it did not collide with the Cult of the Emperor, the new state religion of the Romans which, from the time of Augustus, took the place of the decayed state religion devoted to the Roman adaptations of the Greek worship of the Olympian Gods.

When, however, the Christian preacher went through Roman territory to preach the gospel of the new religion, it was generally not in the language of the Romans that he transmitted his message, but that of the Greeks, as it was also in Greek that the writings which later became the New Testament of the Christian Bible were written.

The great enthusiasm of the upper classes of Roman society which began in the third century B.C. and continued during the centuries following made it a part of the equipment of the educated Roman to know Greek, much as the educated European has long been expected to know French; to read it with some ease, to speak it at least a little, even though he wrote it only with difficulty. This fact made contact in the Greek tongue possible at Rome, and with some persons throughout the western part of the Roman Empire.

In the eastern Mediterranean, throughout Egypt and east to the Mesopotamian Valley, the conquest of Alexander had disseminated the Greek language and civilization through all the centers of population to which it had not been previously indigenous. Greek was the language of commerce and trade, and thus it was the language of travel. It was then the one language in which it was possible to reach the largest number of people throughout the area of the ancient classical civilization.

As to the social atmosphere of this area, during the period immediately preceding and following the birth of Christianity, it was, as at all times when men and ideas begin to disseminate and mix broadly and indiscriminately, a time of comparative mental chaos, and social unrest.

The Romans, with their administrative ability, their practical common sense, their unimaginative solidity, were embarked upon a career of systematic exploitation of their colonial empire. Unproductive riches unlocked by the establishment of communication between different countries, the surplus products of rich agricultural areas, poured into Rome. Romans sufficiently well placed to profit in this spoliation and exploitation grew rapidly rich, while in Italy agriculture declined, unable to compete with richer areas. The poor flocked to Rome, and the state, as a means of postponing social disturbance, fed and amused them.

Even under the later days of the Republic Italy had been a great center of invested capital. Under the Empire the city of Rome became more and more a city of capitalists, bankers and men of business affairs. Profits to be made in trade and speculation in outlying portions of the Roman dominion were so great that money was loaned at rates of interest unbelievably high. As in all cities where large sums of money change hands, and where big speculative profits are quickly made, with all the brokers and go-betweens likely in one way or another to share in such profits, the shifty trickster, the gleaner in the alleys of exchange rose and fell, the vulgarian often flourished. Haughty patricians, though they might shun active relation to trade, lent out their fluid assets at exorbitant rates, while living lives of retirement in their country villas.

The fields of the Campagna surrounding Rome ceased to produce grain, which could be more profitably produced elsewhere, and were given over to the raising of flowers and garden truck, for the houses and tables of the rich. The decline of agriculture in Italy made it often more a matter of luxury than economy to keep many slaves, while at the same time more humanitarian feelings with respect to slavery contributed to bring about the freeing of many. These freed slaves flocked to the cities, to swell the number of the proletariat, hopelessly poor. The cleverest among them became rich. Juvenal, the Roman satirist, tells of the barber, then a slave, who had years before shaved him, who challenged the riches of the entire nobility with his single fortune.[4]

The newly rich vied with each other in ostentatious luxury.[5] They pushed, wherever possible, into fashionable society. How vulgar and how profligate such society then was the satirists have shown us. To be sure the persons who composed it were a small percentage of the population, but their influence spread in many ways beyond the limits of their class. The surrounding country catered to them, furnishing the luxuries of the table and toilette. The artisans worked in a large measure and most profitably for them. Shopkeepers schemed for their patronage. No patronage is so profitable measured by the profits of a single transaction, but none is so easily caught by a trick or a happy chance and lost because of an individual whim or a passing mode. Then too there were the trains of servitors, slaves, the most intimate observers of their profligacy, the most constantly dependent for tolerable existence upon ability to keep their favor, the most frequent victims of their jangled nerves, of their fickle fancies. When there was added to this a populace sufficiently idle to look on at the display of luxury, fed largely by state doles, and entertained at the expense of the state by brutal and obscene performances, to most people life in the city could hardly have appeared, when they lifted their eyes above their daily routine, as much else but a scramble, a gamble, or the fleeting opportunity for a little amusement.

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[5] The Trimalchio of Petronius *Satyrycon* is the classic example of this.

[4] *First Satire,* 24-25.

Rome was of course not all of Italy, much less all of the Empire. The industry which fed the city and furnished its luxury went on in the provinces, which enjoyed prosperity greater than ever before, together with the constant care and activity of producing that which furnished a livelihood. Many of them grew in strength and solidity, guarding and preserving, as later centuries were to show, better than Rome herself the finer Roman traditions. However Rome was to a large and growing extent the pattern of the large cities of the Empire. Moreover it was a center of reflection upon life, and those who wished to orientate their existence intelligently could hardly do so without considering what they saw there.

The manner of escape from this which most appealed to the Roman temperament was to seek, first of all, to be comfortable in their personal surroundings,[6] second, and available to a somewhat more restricted class, to flee the city for the quiet and simplicity of country life;[7] and for a still more restricted number, to seek in their country villas, among a few chosen associates, a life of studious and cultivated retirement. Among such circles as the latter religious-philosophical attempts to attain a feeling of religious exaltation, or to resolve the enigma of fate, were often central.[8] The search for the *good life* in one form or another was in such circles indeed most often central, even though there might rule a pessimism as to the possibility of attaining reliable truth which made of cultivated avocations first of all a dignified, agreeable, and intelligent use to which to put their leisure.

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[6] Duruy, in his *Histoire de l'Empire Romain,* calls attention to this desire for good living, for comfortable and agreeable material surroundings as one of the most important forces making for the growth of *business* and wealth in Rome.

But, underlying the reveries of the thoughtful, and pointing the pen of satirists, disillusionment, vain sighings for a past believed to have been better, mistrust both of life and human nature, despair with respect to assistance from the *gods,* were the commonest habitual mood. For Epictetus philosophy becomes a preparation against things which may happen to a man.[9] In such an environment, Seneca concludes, the bravest and sanest might strive for little more than to make the noblest use possible of a situation in which hope and fear seemed the roots of all human misery.[10] From this messy muddle the gods, if gods there were, were so remote that one approached them but as children "crying in the night, and with no language save a cry."[11] Juvenal, an extreme example, finds after a long catalogue of vain human hopes and desires, no encouragement to hope for anything beyond strength to bear the misfortunes which come;[12] no honesty or good faith anywhere, except of the rareness of a boy born with four legs; and no comfort save in a clear conscience.[13]

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[7] "Ein grosser Unterschied von griechischer und römanischer Auffassung der Lebensfreude liegt darin, dass der Grieche ein ganz überzeugter Städter war, der Römer hingegen eine tiefgewurzelter Vorliebe für Landleben unde sehr viel Naturschwärmerei zeigte." Von Gleichen-Russwourm, *Elegentiae. Geschichte der vornehmen Welt im klassischen Altertum,* 381.

[8] Such circles were scattered through the early Christian centuries. The works of *Fowler* and *Dill* touch upon some of them. That of the Empress Julia Domnia, in the third century A.D. is one of the most important. Indeed it is said the *Life of Appollonius of Tyana,* by Philostratus, and the *Deipnosophists of* Athenæus was perhaps inspired by the meetings which took place in her palace.

[9] *Sayings of Epictetus,* III, x, 6.

[10] Seneca, *Of a Happy Life,* chap. iv.

[11] Dion Chrysostom, *Orations.*

[12] *Tenth Satire.*

[13] *Thirteenth Satire.*

Doubtless few people saw things so black. Indeed in any time life easily becomes to the large majority quite naturally the thing they find it to be. A considerable number were getting rich, almost everybody found a relatively tolerable way of getting through those hours in which they did not sleep, even the exigencies of hopeless poverty furnish a routine of habit against which the thought of many has not sufficient energy to react in protest.

If Rome, the center of a great capitalistic empire, toward which flowed the riches of the known world, gave many grounds for such melancholy reflections, what of the influence of the gayer, less stable, more imaginative, restless and speculative Greeks?

The tradition of intellectual glory died hard among the Greeks. In the dismembered empire of Alexander the Great scarcely any potentate neglected the attempt to make his capital a center of art and letters. A catalogue of Greek literature during the last three pre-Christian centuries shows scarcely any branch of learning or literary endeavor without representative examples. Science and speculation went on, developing many hints left by preceding thinkers. Works of classic authors were collected, edited, commentated. Libraries were collected. But all this intellectual curiosity and activity had lost the vital relationship to Greek life it for a time had possessed.

For it must not be forgotten that what we think of as the Greek Spirit was compounded of two separate elements; one of temperament, which still kept them curious, adventurous, both in thought and action; the other of circumstance, which knit up the individualistic tendencies of the Greek in a common task as the citizen of a small community, where it was ideally expected that each individual personality might play as great a part as his personal capabilities permitted.

It was difficult for Greeks to leave anything alone and stable when it had evidenced a power to cramp their freedom. Jealousies and particularistic interests had already begun to destroy the Greek civic ideal when Alexander continued the destruction of the old free Hellas. The Romans finished the work. With the rise of Rome even Greeks might perceive how the future belonged to her. Several Greek rulers of Alexander's parceled empire, in dying, bequeathed their dynastic claims to Rome. Such a patriot as Polybius, having struggled and suffered for the freedom of his native Greek city, finally gave up the struggle, took service under the Roman Empire, of which he wrote a history, to show how inevitable had been the rise of Rome to commanding power over other nations.

Hellenes had little left to live for beyond their individual selves. The spirit of adventure, the love of variety and change, impatience with the dull routine of reality which had always been characteristic of the Greeks, had now little or nothing to check it. Clever Greeks sought to make their fortune, or live by their wits, in all the cities of the Mediterranean basin. Even such a man as Cicero, who had spent the greater part of his life studying the classics of Greek literature, found the bulk of the Greeks morally unstable; incapable of being bound by an engagement or even an oath.[14] Allowance must be made for the fact that the slower-witted Romans never understood, and for that reason if no other were likely to mistrust the Greeks, this much at least is certain, that, the centrifugal forces so strong in the Greek temperament once given unchecked rein, the Greek influence rapidly dissipated.

What was often true, in ways less noble, of the average Greek can be noted even in the works of outstanding personalities, such as Posidonius and Plutarch. Their thought is made up of scraps and shreds of doctrine. While giving serious thought and methodical study to scientific subjects they were both capable of what appears the most naïve credulity. When two centuries of the Christian era had passed a Greek writer, who had spent his youth as a student of philosophy at Athens, states in a letter that, from a voyage in Greece and study there he had been turned into a barbarian, "not by long sojourning outside Hellas, but by long sojourning in her midst." [15]

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[14] Cicero, *Oration for Flaccus*. The statement is here special pleading in a case of law, but doubtless represents a general opinion of Greeks among the Romans.

[15] Philostratus, *Apollonius of Tyana, Letter XXXIV*, in Loeb's Classics, II, 431.

It must not be assumed, however, that the centuries preceding and immediately following the birth of Christianity were lost to a sense of decency and without either ethical ideals or religious impulses. The contrary is rather the case. No more heroic attempts to lead sternly moral lives among an environment which seemed little to favor such strictness was ever made than in the case of some of the Stoics. Never perhaps, in a period of equal length, was more energy expended in an attempt to arrive at reasonable and satisfying ethical principles. At no time perhaps in the history of the world have more people, of more different social strata, given so much time and thought to religion.

In preaching at Athens Paul opened his remarks by telling his hearers that he observed they were very religious.[16] He might have said the same thing in Alexandria, or at Rome. Perhaps a short catalogue of some of the important cults with temples or devotees at Rome will serve as striking evidence of this fact.

The family religion of house and hearth continued to hold its place; not only did the religion occupied with the vegetation cycle live on in rural Italy, but in its centralized form, under the care of the Arval brotherhood, it had an important revival in the early centuries of the Empire, and continued until at least the middle of the third century A.D. The worship of principal state gods which had undergone Greek influence continued. Hercules, and Sylvanus, the nymphs and river gods, still continued to receive sacrificial offerings and votive tablets. Æsculapius rose to be the principal object of worship in the time of the Antonines.

In addition there was the new state religion, the worship of the imperial family, or of the emperor himself, founded by Augustus, which came to be the one religion which Rome forced all its subject peoples to reverence.

As for mystery religions Rome had not only the Greek types, which have been briefly described, but it had others, still more fashionable, borrowed from Asia Minor and Egypt.

From the East many cults were transported to Rome; that of the Great Mother and of Bellona from Phrygia, of the Baals from

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[16] Acts VII. 22.

Heliopolis, Thamise from Syria, Mithra from Persia. From Egypt came the cults of Isis, of Serapis, of Osiris and Anubis; from Carthage that of the Dea Cælestis.

But these cults hardly exhausted the attempt to find supernatural relief or assistance. Astrology and magic flourished. Interest in old oracles, such as that of Delphi, revived. Other and more questionable oracles arose. The omen of dreams and their interpretation won the credulity of emperors and even of such a scorner of the popular religion as Pliny.

But the real deity behind all this frenzied running hither and thither for religious succour was, as Gilbert Murray suggests, Fortune—and Fortune, not so much as Fate but as mere Chance. He quotes from Pliny's *Natural History* a passage of interest:

> Throughout the whole world, at every place and hour, by every voice Fortune alone is invoked and her name spoken: she is the one defendant, the one culprit, the one thought in men's mind, the one object of praise, the one cause. She is worshipped with insults, counted as fickle and often as blind, wandering, inconstant, elusive, changeful, and friend of the unworthy—We are so much at the mercy of chance that Chance is our god.[17]

It was indeed this god of Chance which sent men and women from one shrine to another, in hope that they might happen to hit upon the one particular deity who was able or disposed to help them. Religions were *tried* as valitudinarians often try one remedy or physician after another. Even the Stoics tended to put their trust in divination, and the Stoic emperor, Marcus Aurelius, was accused of consulting the Chaldeans when his daughter became infatuated with a gladiator.

It was not only that there was to be reckoned with the exigencies of human misfortune or suffering against which religion is called upon wherever it exists. There was a pervading lack of confidence in life itself, and a growing lack of confidence in the whole social environment. Ancient thought, when it had speculated about life, had come more generally to the conclusion that its ultimate being was spiritual; that spirit and reason were, if not one and the same thing, allied aspects of the one ultimate reality, which might be called God. The universe, even its most superficial phenomena, might then be expected to have at least a skeleton of rationality, as implied by the Greek word *cosmos,* which found its root in the conception of order. Behind everything, imperfectly represented but still to be discovered by analysis, they might expect to find a core of rational idea. When therefore they began to doubt the reliability of the most methodical reasoning, finding out how many different types of hypothesis might be reasonably supported, then to doubt the rationality of the scheme of things entire, noting how that which in the comprehensive absolute could easily be shown to be irrational so often proved to be brilliantly successful for the individual, what was there to do, save to turn one's back upon the world with Stoic indifference and calm, or to trust blindly to chance?

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[17] Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion,* 114. The whole chapter in which this passage is quoted, entitled by the author "The Failure of Nerve," is colored by his Hellenic enthusiasm, but nevertheless goes far toward the root of the matter.

Such cold logic was of course only for an intellectual minority. A larger number of still thoughtful and well-informed people might have reasoned somewhat as follows: We see about us certain traditional institutions. Some authoritative persons tell us this order was instituted by the gods, others that it was devised by wise men for the purpose of establishing justice among men. At all events this is civilization. Outside the borders where this civilization exists and such customs hold are impassable forests, men who walk upon their heads, barbaric prodigies, indescribable monsters. Though it seems either that the gods who instituted this civilization have no interest in justice, or the men who devised it were not so wise as we have thought, nevertheless we must save ourselves in it; keep our feet lest we be trampled under. Not only this, but we must hope to see this social order somehow saved, for without is unthinkable chaos. This, good or bad, is all the good that can exist on earth. Perhaps the gods preserve their reason and their justice for another world, for which we are prepared by the mysteries; but this is human life, though gods, reason, everything's a-totter. Save me! Save Rome afterwards; Fate, Fortune, Chance, whatever it may be that rules!

Of course there must have been many who, in this sense, did not think at all. If unhappy they plodded, waiting dumbly for a new idea, some new orientation—slaves many of them, who had to take their beatings like a dog, licking the hand when it had dropped its bludgeon, hoping perhaps to find master or mistress to-morrow in a better disposition.

It was not a pleasant picture, but who could imagine a better? Kings, rulers, were no magic names for the ancient of these times; governments might change. But civilization, the social order that they knew, was at least to this degree sacred: that all outside its borders were barbarians. For long the world had been one of Greeks and Barbarians. Romans had made it one of Græco-Romans and Barbarians, letting down these bars gradually by making Romans of Barbarians. When finally the barbarians were at their gates they could hardly imagine what might happen if the dyke burst. And there was no idea that out of traditional disorder a new type of civilization might emerge; no comforting theory of social evolution to make of change the prelude to ever higher, better forms. If things were really so black as they sometimes seemed one might only look back to the Golden Age, already long departed when people began so to call it, and daily getting farther and farther away.

Is it too much to wonder speculatively whether, in such a situation, there was really any other way out than this: that people, many of them ultimately, should come to believe, and in moments at least to act on the belief, that the world they were living in was of less and different importance than they had imagined; that it was not even good in the sense that the Stoics had taken it to be; and that the good things in the world were such that human beings might, while continuing to live in it, so do as if its present form, or its continued existence even, were to them of no significance, not only so far as the ultimate ends, but even so far as the daily activities of their lives were concerned?

# BOOK II

# BEGINNINGS AND STRUGGLES

# VI

SOME important constituents of the soil upon which the seed of Christianity was sown, some environing conditions of its general development, have been rapidly reviewed. We come now to consider the seed itself; then its planting and early growth.

But what was the *seed?* The question fairly bristles with difficulties. Books have been written to voice the conviction that Jesus never really lived, and to explain the growth of a myth, grown gradually for the purpose of providing a prophetic-divine person who might stand for, symbolize, and become a mouthpiece for a religious movement not initiated by any individual person, but rather initiated and drawn together by an esoteric cult, to meet finally the universal longing of the people of the Mediterranean shores for *salvation,* with a god in human form who had died and risen again, after the pattern of deities of various mystery religions. Others have been written to explain the psychology of Jesus, at one extreme after the pattern of common forms of mental aberrations or types of insanity. The first sort grew from the modern study of myths and their growth, and from a natural dislocation of balance following conclusions of critical study of the New Testament, which made it evident that the historical Jesus was not precisely he whom the Gospels mirror. The second sort sprang from still more modern preoccupation with abnormal mental psychology, which has been found so closely allied many places with religious phenomena.

All this study has contributed to the better understanding of that personality which is obscured, but not entirely hidden, by the Gospel narratives; but the most radical theories have passed from the field of serious scholarly consideration, as it were precisely as such radical theories began to penetrate broadening circles of public interest. That there was a real Jesus, whose personality is substantially portrayed in the four narratives of the Bible—or three of them more particularly—was never perhaps better established than now, after much free, thorough, and uncompromising analysis and criticism. We have doubtless many of his words, remembered with substantial accuracy by persons more accustomed to learn by and treasure the spoken word than we to-day. But these words were remembered as oracles (*logoi*), and of their original context we are far less sure, though it is just this context which might often throw most light upon their precise significance. We have also, probably, accounts of actions of his which have come, through a single intermediary, some of them perhaps, from eyewitnesses. But the eyewitnesses saw with eyes not ours, and remembered afterwards with certain influencing conceptions already formed. In consequence, although Biblical criticism has not been, in its solid results, nearly so destructive as popular opinion often assumes, the problems that remain are subtle, puzzling, often fundamental, and very many; and of these problems the most troublesome surround an attempt to portray the actual public ministry of the historical Jesus.

In a sense, it does not belong to our story to make an attempt to reconstruct this ministry and personality, since it was upon an interpretation of that personality already effected by the messianic conception, and by the belief that Jesus had been *raised up* after his death, that Christianity was founded. Whatever ideas Jesus may have come to have, comprehending the welding of his followers into a world-saving community, the seed from which was to spring the kingdom of God, his death took the matter in a sense out of his hands, and his followers were rewelded by the belief in his bodily resurrection.

In consequence his actual personality was not, and only in partial measure ever has been, the center about which Christianity gathered its corporate force. What Christian apologetic wanted in its earliest period, what it has wanted in subsequent periods, has never been precisely this. It is much less the *historical Jesus* than Jesus in history who belongs to our sketch. Ideally we might wish to have an interpretation of that personality earlier even than the earliest Gospel. Practically we shall be obliged to content ourselves here more modestly.

The Four Gospels do give a generally consistent picture of a definite human personality which, as suggested in the introductory chapter, has exercised a measure of persistent influence even upon Christianity in its corporate form, and which has exerted an even clearer influence upon individual Christians, probably in every period. This picture, without polemic interest, with consciousness of many matters of controversy and many still unsolved problems, and above all with an attempt to avoid the temptation to substitute any individual interpretation of the author as an authentic historical Jesus, the story of his public life is here retold; with an attempt rather to assess the immediate effect of that personality, and emphasize its significant dramatic force, than either to plumb the depths of his consciousness, or to establish an objective skeleton of historical fact. The figure of Jesus stands, and at all times has stood, both within and without organized Christianity. Always it has not only inspired but also judged the religion which it inspired. To recall that story here may enlighten, both by direct contribution and by contrast, the long and complicated history of that religion to which it gave birth.

There was a man named John, whose father was of the hereditary priesthood of Jehovah. This John, convinced of the great sinfulness of his people, and of the near approach of a judge and king, who would condemn those who did not immediately repent in expectation, as preparatory to setting up his kingdom, set aside his inherited priestly function and withdrew to the wilderness. Here he lived a life of fasting and prayer, clothed in a single rough garment, and eating only such food as this wilderness afforded. Others gathered about him, particularly when he had begun to preach his message of repentance. For this message brought terror to the hearts of many, since he told them that, in the great day of judgment, it would profit a man nothing merely to have been born a Jew, if he remained a sinner, since each man was to be judged individually according to his deeds.

And so he taught that none might escape, save those who repented and were cleansed of the sins which condemned them. And those who repented he cleansed in a ceremony of baptism, uniting those so cleansed for a new corporate life of righteousness, preparatory to the setting up of the Kingdom of the Messiah.[1] For this reason he was called John the Baptizer.

And those who came out to hear him were so many that Herod, the ruler, began to fear an uprising, since everyone seemed to listen for his words, and the report of them went even northward into Galilee.[2]

And Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee, son of Mary who was the widow of Joseph, a woodworker[3] of Nazareth, came with others of his country to hear him.

Jesus, moved by the message of John, wished to join himself in baptism with those who had accepted it, and came also to John to be baptized. And it came to be commonly reported among the followers of Jesus afterwards that at the moment of baptism Jesus saw as it were the heavens opening, and from the rent in the heavens he heard a voice which was saying to him, "Thou art my beloved son; this day have I begotten thee."[4]

And Jesus remained with John and his followers a season, beginning later himself to preach and to baptize in a place not far from where John was baptizing. However, the time came when Jesus ceased to baptize those who came to him, and when also he and his followers ceased to observe rules of fasting and other ascetic exercises such as John enjoined upon his followers. And disputings arose between the followers of Jesus and the followers of John, whereupon Jesus withdrew into Galilee.

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[1] Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews,* XVIII, v. 2) says that John bid his followers "unite in baptism." For discussion, Goguel, *Jean Baptiste* chap. I, note at bottom 16.

[2] Josephus tells of Herod's fear of popular uprising to be caused by John's preaching, though giving no account of teaching which might inspire such fear.

[3] Contemporary Jewish literature has no word for *carpenter* particularly, but only for woodworker in general. (Dalman, *Les Itineraires de Jesus* (German orig.), 104-105).

[4] This reading, an exact translation of Psalm II. 7, is found in some important manuscripts, among those the great Cambridge Mss. known as "D."

But John continued to preach and to baptize, until finally, Herod having been moved to act against him, John was arrested in the territory of Herod, imprisoned, and subsequently put to death.

And after John had been arrested, Jesus began to preach openly in Galilee, proclaiming, "The appointed measure of time has been completed, and the Kingdom of the Heavens has drawn near."

It is said that, in his preaching, he came first to Capernaum, a Galilean village beside the Lake of Galilee, where there were men living who knew him, and who were also awaiting the coming of the kingdom. Along the shore of the lake he saw two of these men, Simon and his brother Andrew, casting their nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Come with me and be fishers after men." So they left their nets.

Farther along the shore he saw two other men, James and John who were the sons of Zebedee. Them he called likewise to go with him, and they left their boat when they had moored it, to go along with him.

And Jesus went to lodge in the house of Simon, the others accompanying him thither, and there they stayed together until evening, talking and hearing of the things which were before them. Then, some days later when the Sabbath had come, Jesus spoke in the local synagogue; and his hearers were much moved, for he taught them, not with timid interpretations of the accepted religious law, as their scrupulous rabbim, but boldly, like one possessing in himself authority.

It chanced that there was in the synagogue one whose reason was unsettled and obsessed by the current expectancies of the Messiah's coming. This man, listening to Jesus, cried out, "What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God."

And when Jesus had spoken to the maniac to quiet him he remained silent, and the people saw him as one from whom an evil spirit had been driven out. For the insane were commonly believed to be possessed by demons, who might be driven out by those who had the power. And the report of this ran through the village, and about the countryside.

When afterwards they had returned to the house of Simon, they found the mother of his wife ill with a fever. When Jesus heard of this he went beside her bed and took her hand, and she rose up, the fever leaving her. The report of this also spread through the village, so that after sunset, the Sabbath being ended,[5] all the sick of the village were brought and laid at the door of Simon's house, and all the people of the village gathered there to see what Jesus would do; and he healed some of them,[6] charging them not to spread abroad the report of what he had done.

Indeed this flocking to him to witness marvels of healing he might accomplish seemed to trouble him, for in the night following, long before daybreak, he went out and away quietly while the rest were sleeping, into a deserted place in the hills behind the town, where he was alone in prayer. When morning had come the crowd swarmed again about the doorway of Simon's house, and Simon and the others went out to find Jesus, begging him to return, since all the people were asking for him. But he said, "Let us go elsewhere into the villages roundabout in order that we may proclaim the message there. For that purpose I came away hither." [7]

So they went into other villages and synagogues of Galilee, proclaiming the message of the kingdom.[8]

When, after some days, it was learned that he had returned to Capernaum, so many gathered about the door of the house where he was, with some religious leaders and teachers of the law, that passage to the door was blocked by the crowd. And four men came, bearing upon a litter another who was a paralytic. When the bearers saw that they could not push in by way of the door, because of the crowd, they climbed to the flat roof of the simple cottage with their burden, dug through the clay which covered the thatch of branches, removed some supporting poles, and let down the litter through the ceiling of the room where Jesus was, and at his feet.[9]

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[5] In connection with later acts of healing *on the sabbath,* it is interesting to note how the pious Jews waited until the sabbath was ended to bring their sick for healing.

[6] It should be noted that at this point Mark (I. 34) says, "He healed many"; Matthew (VIII. 16), "He healed all"; Luke (IV. 40-41), "He healed them, and cast out devils from many."

[7] Luke changes the *came away* to *was sent forth,* or *commissioned* the verb from which derived the name *apostle* later given his closest followers who taught after his death.

[8] Luke here, though generally emphasizing miracles of healing, says nothing either of *healing* or *exorcism.*

This confident zeal touched Jesus, and he said to the paralytic, "Son, may your sins be forgiven you."

And the others in the room, who were learned in the religious law, questioned his words in their hearts, because they seemed to them blasphemous, since they believed that it was given to Jehovah only to forgive sins. And Jesus was immediately conscious of their questioning, and said to them, "Which, think you easier, to say to him, *May your sins be forgiven,* or to say, *Arise, take up your litter and walk?"*

When they did not answer he added to the paralytic, "In order that you all may know that a man[10] has power upon earth to forgive sins, I say unto you, Arise, pick up your bed and depart into your own house."[11]

And the paralytic rose up, and went out with the four who had carried him there, in the sight of everybody. The crowd was struck with amazement, but the religious authorities present shook their heads, and were offended that Jesus should have presumed to forgive sin.

And Jesus continued to teach those who gathered to hear him, wherever it might be, in the fields round about, beside the lake, or in the synagogue. On one occasion, returning from the shore of the lake where he had been preaching, he passed by where the local tax collector sat before his door. This tax collecter, Matthew by name, was a Jew; but his fellow Jews hated him, as they hated all Jews who collected taxes for the Romans, considering and treating them as apostate and outcast. Regardless of this popular hatred Jesus stopped to talk with Matthew, and remained afterwards to eat with him, and with others whom he invited. When this became known some complained of it to the followers of Jesus, saying, "He eats with publicans and sinners."

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[9] Roofs in Palestine and Egypt were still, in the time of Jerome, so constructed often as to make this unroofing of a chamber, with no permanent serious harm, possible. (See Dalman, *Les Itineraires de Jesus* (From German ed. 1929), 103).

[10] Dalman (*Words of Jesus*) concludes that a later particular usage of Jesus of the term "Son of Man," is more probably here substituted for an Aramaic term meaning simply *man* in general.

[11] The point of this whole charge of blasphemy centers around a popular belief that disease and misfortune was in general at least, a punishment for sin. This view is one of those against which Job is made to protest in the much earlier "Book of Job." Nothing in action or words of Jesus here indicates departure from this belief, but his immediate problem for the moment was other than this. When his own experience met the problem of evil it was, however, to rest in no such solution as that which here links sin and disease.

When his followers repeated this criticism to Jesus he said, "They who are well need no physician, but only the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance." Then the thought went further, exposing an ironic implication—"No man sews a piece of unshrunken cloth upon an old garment, lest the patch, in shrinking, pull at the worn cloth and cause a larger rent. And no man puts new wine into old and rotting wine-skins, lest in fermenting it burst the weakened vessel. New wine is put into new wine-skins." Already he was learning that those who counted themselves subjects of the approval of Jehovah not only had their ears closed beforehand to his teachings, but also resented the possibility that he might extend their privilege to others whom they accounted sinners. But the simple-minded fishermen and peasant folk who followed him could not yet comprehend the bearing of his words.

And still he continued going about among the villages of Galilee. On the Sabbath he would go and talk to them in their synagogues. Once, as with others he was on his way to service in one of these synagogues, he passed through a field of grain. Looking out over the ripening grain, Jesus said, "The kingdom of Jehovah is much as if one should cast seed upon the earth which, even while he slept and when he rose, night and day, kept growing, he knew not how. For the kingdom of God comes not with looking for it, in a manner such that one may say, *Look it is here,* or *See, it is there.* This kingdom is within you. It is like a grain of mustard seed, smallest of all the seeds, yet when full grown largest of all herbs.[12]

Some of those with him who were followers of him plucked at the grain, and began to eat of it as they went along. Others, noting what they did, said to Jesus, "Look, your disciples are picking grain." For they considered it unlawful to pick grain upon the Sabbath, because of the commandment against doing labor upon that day.

And Jesus quoted their own sacred Scriptures against them, saying, "Did you never hear how David also, the approved servant of Jehovah, did with his men what was unlawful when they were hungry, eating of the holy bread in the Temple, which the priests only were allowed to eat? Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for men; wherefor man is master even of the Sabbath."

Shortly after came opportunity to further clarify his teaching about the Sabbath; for in the synagogue where they entered Jesus found a man who was sick. First asking those about whether they held it equally wrong to do good or ill upon the Sabbath; to save a life or to kill, he straightway cured the sick man. His critics did not answer the question which he had so answered for them, but when they had gone out from the synagogue they began to plan how they might cause his arrest.

Jesus went out alone from the synagogue, and into the hills, where he spent the night. When he returned to Capernaum he again found a crowd gathered about the door of the house where he was staying, among them certain learned in the law, who had assembled to look into the things which he was doing and preaching. And within the house was his mother, and brothers of his, who had come down from Nazareth, troubled perhaps that he should be so neglecting the work of the family woodworking shop. And the doctors of the law were telling the people that Jesus cast out devils through the power of Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils. This charge Jesus controverted with sharp sarcasm, asking how they imagined the kingdom of Beelzebub might hope to stand firm, if the Prince gave to others power to so weaken it. Also, because in the Jewish law there were ceremonies provided for the casting out of devils, he added, "And by what power do you yourselves cast out devils?"

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[12] "With the branch of a mustard tree one could covered the hut of a potter" (Dalman, *Les Itineraires de Jesus,* 106).

As a result of this controversy a tumult arose, and his friends within came out to bring him into the house, fearing themselves that he had lost his senses. And they told him that his mother and his brothers were in the house and wishing to see him. Looking out over the circle standing about him, Jesus said, "Behold my mother and my brothers; whoever shall do the will of God."

And Jesus was always teaching, often in parables, or in pithy sayings drawn from the life he had known, and which was known to all who listened—words not easily forgotten. Meanwhile certain among the Jews were striving to stir up the followers of Herod, the ruler, against him. But Herod himself was a timid man, occupied with Roman intrigue, meshed in family difficulties, and fearful already of the criticism awakened by his arrest of John the Baptizer, who still retained a public following which stood off looking on the whole critically at the words and actions of Jesus. Meanwhile the people who had looked on at the things Jesus was doing began to wonder more and more whether this man were the Messiah whom so many were expecting, and they waited for him to declare himself.

And from this situation pent with various currents of excitement, enmity, and expectation, Jesus appears to have withdrawn himself, going with a few of his followers, who had come to be more and more constantly with him, across the lake, where they should be outside the borders of Herod's rule.

They went away in a small boat, but as they departed others got into other boats to follow them, and still others went on foot around the northern shore of the lake, so that when Jesus had disembarked upon the other side a crowd again gathered, to which were added others from villages to the east of the lake.

And Jesus felt pity for these people, who had been at pains to follow and hear him. They seemed to him like sheep which had wandered into a pasture where there was no grass; and looking upward he saw, as in a vision, all nations coming to him. First there were the Jews, to whom Moses had given five loaves (those five books which they called the Law, and believed Moses to have written). But these five loaves of the law were insufficient. Having eaten of them their spirits hungered still. So, in love and pity, he gathered these people about him, upon a little mound in the plain where they were, and he began to speak to them, saying:

Blessed are all you who sorrow now, for you shall be comforted hereafter; and you who are humble, for the Kingdom of God is for you.

Blessed are all you who are hungering now, for you will be filled; and you whose hearts remain unsoiled, for you will see God.

Blessed are you, when men reproach you, and persecute you, and slander you on account of me. So men have done before to the prophets which were before your time.

Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. If they smite you upon one cheek, turn to them the other also that they may smite it. If someone take from you your cloak, give him your tunic also. If he compel you to go a mile with him, go with him two.

Give to those who ask of you, and do not turn away from those who would borrow. As you would have others do to you, so do to them. To love only those who love you, to greet those only who are kindred and companions is to do no better than others whom you despise. If you lend to those only from whom you feel certain of a return, what do you do more than the least of men? Even tax-farmers do so much. Lend freely, despairing of no man. So doing you will be as sons of God, who is kind even toward the ungrateful and the evildoers, and whose rain falls alike upon the just and the unjust. Be merciful, even as your Father in the Heavens is merciful.

Judge not others, that you may not be judged; for by that measure with which you judge others you yourself will be judged. Should you look askance at the splinter of a twig which is in the eye of your brother, never remarking the beam which is in your own eye? Would you say to your brother, Let me remove the tiny splinter from your eye, when there is a ship's plank in your own? Hypocrite! Cast first the beam out of your own eye, and then you may hope to see clearly to pluck out the mite from the eye of your brother.

And how can you call me Master, if you do not the things that I say? For none is able to serve two masters. For the one he will hate, and the other he will love. To one he will cleave, the other he will despise. You cannot serve God and Mammon; where your treasure is, there will be your heart also. The light of the body is the eye with which it sees. If the eye be single, the whole body will be lighted; if the eye be envious, the whole body will be darkened. And if then the very light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!

No sound tree brings forth corrupt fruit, nor can a rotten tree bring forth good fruit. One gathers no figs of thorn bushes, nor grapes from a bramble. Out of his heart's good treasure the good man brings forth good things, and from the evil of the evil man's heart is brought forth evil. What fills the heart, that the mouth speaks.

Lay not up your treasure where moths and rust destroy, and where thieves will break in and steal; but where neither moths nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves will not break in and steal. Be not anxiously careful for your physical life, what you shall eat or drink; nor for your bodies, how you shall be clothed. Is not life more than nourishment, and the body more than its garments? The crows neither plant nor harvest and store up in barns, yet are they fed. Are you not of more account than they? By anxious provision you cannot add even so much as an inch to your stature. As for clothing, consider the wild flowers of the field. They neither toil nor spin, yet are arrayed in beauty beyond the robes of your richest king. If God so clothes even the weeds of the meadow, shall he not much more clothe you, oh ye of little faith?

Who hears my words to follow them in action is like a man who builds his house upon a rock. Rain descends, floods come, winds blow and beat upon that house, and it stands, for its foundation is upon a rock. Who hears and does not follow is like one who builds upon the sand. When rain and floods and wind come it falls, and great will be its fall.

When he had finished Jesus said to his disciples who had come with him. "These people hunger." And they, thinking he spoke of food, replied, "How can we procure food for so many?"

Perceiving that they thought he spoke of bread, he said, "I have bread that you know nothing of. Our fathers were given *manna* in the wilderness, but they were not satisfied. Moses gave them the *loaves* of the law, which to-day the scribes break in pieces for the children of Moses. That was not the true bread from heaven. The true bread from heaven is I, who am come to do the will of my Father who is in the heavens. As I do, so I teach, and who heareth me shall not hunger, nor shall he who seeks to learn of me thirst. Why are you perplexed, saying, We have no bread? I spoke not of bread, but of the hunger of those who seek a righteousness which leaves their souls unsatisfied."

Crossing the lake again they came to shore at Capernaum, where Jesus met some who would be healed. And some there were who would have forced him to accept the rôle of the Messiah as king, while others demanded of him a sign from heaven, by which he might justify to them his neglect of some of their customs.

And Jesus said to them, "What sort of a sign do you seek, you who know only the meaning of a red sky at evening or in the morning? Are you able to recognize the signs of God's times and changes? Wicked and apostate nations are always looking for signs, and to such no signs are given, save the sign of Jonah, who preached repentance to the Ninevites.

"Woe unto you, cities and villages of Galilee. If such deeds had been done in Tyre and Sidon as have been accomplished here, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Thou Capernaum, destined of the prophets to be exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for you. The men of Ninevah, who repented at the preaching of Jonah, will rise up against you in the time of judgment, for a greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of Sheba shall bear witness against you, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and a greater than Solomon is here."

At such words the Pharisees were outraged, and the multitude were perplexed, because Jesus seemed to do nothing toward setting up the reign of Jehovah. And Herod, hearing of these things, wondered, because some were saying that John the Baptizer had risen from the dead, some that Elijah had appeared, others that another of the old prophets had risen again. And Herod had a desire to see Jesus.

But Jesus went up to Nazareth, where he had been born. And as was his custom, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and was called upon to read at the service from the roll containing the writings of the Prophets. And he unrolled it to the prophecies of Isaiah, and began to read from it:

> The spirit of Jehovah is upon me,
> For he has anointed me
> To preach glad tidings to the humble.
> He hath sent me to heal the broken heart,
> To proclaim liberty to the captives,
> To open the door of their prisons to the bound;
> To herald the year of Jehovah's favor
> And his day of recompense;
> To comfort those who sorrow,
> Giving to those who mourn in Zion
> For the ashes of grief a festal garland,
> That they may be called trees of righteousness
> Planted of Jehovah to his glory.[18]

Having read Jesus handed back the roll to the attendant, and sat down to expound to them, saying, "To-day is all this that stands written here fulfilled in your hearing."

And they were astonished to hear words of gracious eloquence from his lips, for they were thinking, "Is this not our carpenter's son, whose mother Mary we all know, and whose brothers and sisters are among us daily? Whence has he learned that he should speak with such authority?" So, despite their amazement at his eloquent and moving words, they had little authority with them, causing resentment rather.

And Jesus went on to say, as he perceived a waiting and doubtful attitude, "Doubtless you will be waiting to see done here in my own village things such as you have been told, as accomplished in the region of Capernaum. But I say unto you that no prophet finds acceptance in his own village. There were many lepers among the Jews in the time of Elisha the prophet, but none of these was cleansed—only Naamon, who was a Syrian and a foreigner.

And those in the synagogue perceived that these words were a rebuke to them, and they were angry, and would have driven him out and banished him from the synagogue. Jesus perceived that even among those followers who had come with him there were those who began to separate from him. And when he was gathered with the twelve followers closest to him he asked them if they too had noted this desertion, adding, "And will you also go away?"

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[18] Isaiah LXI. 1-3.

And Simon said, "To whom, Master, should we go? With you are words of life."

# VII

UNDERNEATH the narrative of the preceding chapter, obscured in the hurry of incident, in which even the attempt to construct the actual sequence is hardly possible; obscured by the scattering of teachings which the Gospel narratives use more than any other thing to gather the material into some unity; and by the omission both of events and teachings here which those narratives recount —still little more obscured than in the documents themselves— certain facts may be dimly perceived.

First: as time passed Jesus became more clearly conscious of the nature of his mission and message as he noted its effect upon those who were in various ways moved by his words and actions. It should not be forgotten that we know nothing as to his life or religious experience previous to the time when he was touched by the preaching of John, and little enough as to the effect of this influence, because the rôle of "*precursor*" assigned John by the Christian community had done its work of distortion before the Gospel material began to be assembled in written narrative. But, whatever conception of his mission and message Jesus had, when his independent public ministry began, reactions which it awakened very quickly began to define its effective direction. It seems to be strikingly true of Jesus that he met situations which arose without *rules,* in free spontaneous actions which do not always fit together consistently when we attempt to subordinate them to principles, even such as he himself might enunciate, but which appeal at *fitting,* or beautiful, in their freedom. In short, Jesus experimented, and learned; but even his experiments were grandly significant, and his sureness and rapidity of learning was hardly less than astounding.

Second: the opposition of certain classes among the Jews came to the surface almost immediately, and became continually more pronounced. This factor gains natural emphasis in the Gospels, because of the situation in which the Christian community found itself in that period during which the Gospel material was gotten together into literary form, but this is no false accent. Scribes and Pharisees in the Gospels bear an undue measure of blame merely because they stand there as symbolic of a broad type of reaction neither racially of the Jews nor specifically of any class of Jews as such. The social area of Christian influence, as inspired directly by the personality of Jesus, was being defined.

Third: the relation of Jesus to the general expectations of the Jews gathered about the messianic hope was being defined. Here, while the scribe-and-pharisee attitude was definite and hard, Jesus appears rather to have set up uncertain troubled currents of popular feeling. The mass became, in a sense, more and more mystified as to what this Jesus was about, as they found it impossible to fit him into, or discover him adaptable to current messianic expectations. Demands for definite *signs* of a prophetic mission grew, as did impatience at receiving no signs of the sort they particularly desired.

Fourth: his relation to a few picked followers, of whom tradition came to number twelve particularly, but among whom certain women can hardly be left out, save in so far as the social position of Jewish women in the period gave them a specific rôle, becomes closer and more intimate. He begins to talk to them apart from others of formulating intuitions and conceptions as to the nature of his message, ministry, and fate, concerning which he still maintained silence when speaking to the masses to whom he spoke more publicly.

Fifth: and this remains a psychological puzzle so deep and complicated that we may but suggest it here—he became bolder in personal assertions as to his mission and the enduring truth of his words. The climax of this boldness is still before us.

Sixth: despite the exclusively Jewish intention of the ministry at its beginning, expressed in words credited to Jesus, in sending forth some of his followers upon a missionary expedition, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; [1] or similar words he himself addressed to a woman not a Jew who came to him,[2] there are indications of a consciousness of the fact that, while the ears of Jews were not always open to his words, those of non-Jews sometimes were. The evidence of this is sufficiently scattered that it can hardly be a mere reading back into the Gospel narrative of the later momentous step of Paul, in consciously undertaking a mission among non-Jews of the Mediterranean basin.

It would appear that more than once, before the fatal journey of Jesus to Jerusalem, the situation became menacing on the one side, and on the other it became difficult to handle the attempts made to force him into the rôle of the Messiah. It also appears that, from situations of this sort, he more than once withdrew beyond the boundaries of Galilean political power. The fact that some of his journeys at least were probably journeys of retirement or flight is naturally obscured in the Gospel narratives. One gifted and minute student identifies four such journeys, noting that more detailed and local information concerning these journeys of flight is contained in the Gospel than about the remainder of his missionary work.[3]

Connected with these journeys and periods of retirement, and with his growing perception of the nature and the difficulties of his mission is his sending, in place of himself, certain chosen followers, to spread the message in Jewish portions of Palestine. These missionaries were instructed to herald the kingdom, and to withdraw immediately from wherever the public did not receive them. Incidentally they were also instructed to make the very minimum of material preparation for their journeys, and to entrust themselves to the charity of those to whom they went. Two Gospels (Mark VI. 7; Luke IX. 1) speak of power being given them to *exorcise evil spirits* and *heal the sick;* which Matthew's Gospel expands into the healing of *all diseases* and the *raising of the dead.* (X. 8.) This type of expansion may cast light on

[1] Maathew X. 5, 6.

[2] *Ibid.,* XV. 24.

[3] Keim, *Jesus of Nazareth,* IV, 235 (Eng. trans.).

similar expansion other places with respect to the question of miracles.

The question of Jesus' own conception of his relation to the messianic hopes and beliefs of the Jews is one of the puzzles of the Gospels. We shall not attempt to solve it. It is difficult to divorce clearly his conception of his mission from these hopes, and equally clear that whatever the measure of acceptance and rejection, the adjustment of his mission to those hopes was not a thing which came all at once, and that whatever was his ultimate relation to those hopes he left the matter, at least in so far as his followers understood him, enigmatic. In some sense, certainly, he appears, as we shall see, to have accepted the messianic title, if not the rôle.

With this brief guide, we may return to the narrative.

And Jesus, with his followers, leaving Galilee went into the country round about Cæsarea of Philippi, distant a day's journey or more from the shores of the Lake of Galilee.

As they were going Jesus asked them, "Who are the people saying that I am?"

And they answered, "Some say John the Baptist, who has been raised up, some Elijah, or some other of the older prophets, likewise arisen."

Again he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?"

And it was Simon, also called Peter, who answered: "You are the Messiah, the Anointed of Jehovah."

And Jesus forbade them to so speak of him to any man. Afterwards he began to tell them how it was necessary that he go up to Jerusalem, at the time of the approaching Passover, and how the elders and the High Priest and scribes would reject him, and how he would be killed; but that afterwards, not one of the long-dead prophets, but he himself, should be raised up.

And Peter, taking him apart by himself, began to make objection to this intention; but Jesus, turning from Peter to face the others, said, "Get behind me, Satan, for you are not heeding the things of God, but of men." Then to all of them he said, "He who wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, taking up his cross to follow me. For he who would save his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life on account of me, shall save it. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world; and to lose in doing so his soul? There are some who stand here who shall not taste death before they shall have seen the coming of the kingdom of God."

And his followers, though believing in him, still questioned why they had not seen the expected messianic signs. And one of them asked, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah the prophet must first reappear?" For in one of their prophetic books it was written:

> Behold, I shall send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah shall come. And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.[4]

And Jesus answered, "Elijah has indeed come, and they did not recognize him, but did with him whatever they wished." When he said this they knew that he spoke concerning John the Baptizer.

Again, when they were still upon their way, he said to them a second time, "The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him."

And when the announcement of the time of the Passover festival had been sent forth from Jerusalem, feeling that the time had come when he should shine forth, Jesus steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. And there went with him others, not the chosen disciples only, but a little company, with several women from Galilee.

Wishing to leave Galilee quietly, Jesus crossed the lake, descending the other side of the River Jordan, by a road which others from Galilee, going up to the feast, were unlikely to take.

And when they had recrossed the river, toward Jericho, some mothers brought their children to him, that he might lay his hands upon them and bless them. The disciples would have stopped them, but when Jesus perceived this he rebuked them, saying, "Let the little children come to me, for of such as these is the kingdom of God. Unless one receive it as a child he shall not enter into it."

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[4] Malachi IV. 6.

Farther on, as they approached Jericho, people began to come out to meet him with questions, some friendly, others wishing to test or expose in him some teaching contrary to accepted religious custom or the written law. And to these latter he immediately gave offense, stopping, when he had entered Jericho, at the house of a tax collector.

Jericho being a city large for this country, it was soon known to many that the Prophet from Galilee was in the city, and when he left a large company, many of whom were also going up to the feast at Jerusalem, followed him. And a blind beggar placed himself in the road as they were leaving, crying, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me." [5] When he had thus cried several times Jesus, standing still, said, "Bid him come." And when the word had passed along that Jesus called him, the blind beggar threw off his cloak and came. And Jesus healed him.

With the report of this the multitude which followed became still greater, so that as they entered Jerusalem they were a large company, to which were added others, who came out from Jerusalem to meet the company, as it became known that a prophet from Galilee was approaching. And as they entered the city many spread their garments, or branches broken from trees along the way, before his path. And the people were crying, "Hosanna to him who cometh in the name of Jehovah; and to the Kingdom of Jehovah which is about to appear."

And the crowd already gathered in the city for the festival was stirred, a great company following and shouting, "Hosanna!" And when it was asked who he was, those following shouted in reply, "The prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."

And Jesus went up straightway to the Temple, and entered the court of the Temple. And, seeing all about the court the booths of those who were selling doves and other animals for sacrifice, and the tables of those who changed money of all sorts into that coin in which the tribute of the feast must be paid; and when he heard the jangling of barter, and the cries of those attracting custom to themselves, he began to cast out the traders from the court, overturning the table of a money-changer, and crying out against them, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the people, and you have made of it a den of thieves."

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[5] The *son of David* would more likely have reference merely to the popular Messianic conception than any belief that Jesus was actually of the family of David.

And the chief priests of the Temple stood powerless, fearing a tumult if they protested, for even little children were crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" and the people stood about open-mouthed to hear what he would say.

Then, toward evening, he departed from the city to pass the night in a near-by village, for the city was unable to house all the great number who came up for the feast. And the morning following, when he entered the city and went up to the Temple, there came a delegation from the religious powers of the city, asking him by what authority he said and did the things he had done.

And Jesus replied, "Answer me but one question, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men?" And they feared to answer, knowing that should they say, "From heaven," he might ask them why they had not accepted John, and if they should say, "From men," the crowd would be offended, for the people generally held John to have been a prophet.

So they answered that they did not know.

"As you have not answered, neither shall I tell you from whence is my authority," Jesus replied.

And he turned to the people with a parable:

A man had prepared a vineyard, and let it out to another to cultivate. When the time came to collect his rental he sent his servant to bring back what was due him. But the farmer of the vineyard laid hands on the servant, beat him, and sent him back with nothing. Then he sent a second servant, and to him he did the same. Finally he sent his own son. Then those who rented the vineyard said, Ah, now we have the heir. Let us kill him and seize the heritage. And they did so. What will the owner do? Will he not come and take vengeance upon these tenants?

Those who came from the Temple authorities knew that this parable was spoken against them, but they feared to touch Jesus, for the crowd was with him, waiting to see what next he would do. And still Jesus did and incited no further act of violence, but remained in the Temple, teaching in other parables, and recalling prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah.

Wishing to embroil him with the Roman authorities, or to turn the people against him, they sent to ask him whether it was lawful for a Jew to pay the tribute tax to the Roman emperor. For to many Jews this tax, though trifling, was a humiliation and a matter of conscience, even a sacrilege, since throughout the Empire the Roman emperor was the object of worship as a divine being.

And when they asked him, Jesus asked them in turn to show him a *denarius,* which was the Roman coin in which this tax was paid. And then he showed them upon the coin the figure and name of the emperor, saying, "Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's"; so that in his reply neither the Romans nor the people could find cause of offense in his answer.

When evening came each day, he went out from the city to pass the night, and each morning the crowd waited for him to come up to the Temple, expecting some act of power which would declare him to be indeed the Messiah. And coming each day Jesus taught in the Temple court, and they listened to his words, but they saw no sign of messianic power.

But the opposition of the Temple authorities grew, and Jesus spoke more openly against them:

> The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in the seats of Moses. Whatever they tell you to do, do that; but do not do as they themselves do. They tie together heavy burdens, and set them upon the shoulders of other men, but will not themselves lift so much as a finger to carry such burdens themselves. They do all things to gain a reputation of piety. They love

the chief seats when there is a feast, and to be saluted in the market place as *Master*. Do not as they. Whosoever is greatest among you, let him be the servant of all.

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees! for you search over land and sea to make a convert, and when you have converted him you make him twofold the son of perdition that he was before. You forget not trifling tithes of fruit or herb, but justice and mercy, the weightier matters of the law you leave undone.

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees! for you wash the outside of the cup and platter, but within it is soiled with extortion and excess. You are like white marble tombs, which hide within only dead men's bones.

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees! for you build sumptuous tombs for the prophets and the righteous dead, saying, If we had lived in the days of the prophets we should not have been among their persecutors; while taking pride in the fact that you are descendants of those who slew the prophets.

Fall not short of the stature of those fathers whom you boast. Fill their measure to the full. You serpents, offspring of serpents, how can you escape the judgment of hell?

And the rulers of the Temple waited, wishing to arrest him, but fearing to do so openly for fear of a tumult, which would bring against them the power of their Roman conquerors, at whose suffrance only they held power. For even those who doubted that Jesus was the Messiah were still saying that he was a prophet sent by Jehovah.

Then Judas Iscaraiot, one of the chosen disciples, who had doubtless himself concluded that his hopes in Jesus were but vain, bargained with the religious authorities, to show them opportunity when they might arrest him without knowledge of the multitude.

And Jesus, still leaving the city each night, sat at table with others, in the village of Bethany where he lodged. And as they were about to eat there came in a woman, said to have been one Mary, a courtesan of Magdala, who placed herself at his feet, and began to anoint them with costly perfumed ointment she had brought in a box of alabaster; mingling her tears with the ointment as she wept, and wiping his feet with her loosened hair, and kissing them.

And one of the disciples blamed her for this, saying that it was but waste, since the ointment was costly, and might better have been sold to feed the poor. And another, hostile to Jesus, said, "If this man were a prophet he would know what sort of a woman it is who is at his feet."

And Jesus, turning to his host, said, "Simon, a certain man had two debtors. One owed him five hundred denaria, the other fifty. When they could not pay him, he cancelled both their debts. Which of the two do you think might be most grateful?" And Simon answered, "The one for whom he had forgiven the larger debt."

And he continued, "You see this woman? When I entered here you gave me no water for my feet; she has wet them with her tears. You gave me upon the cheek no kinsman's kiss; she has not left off kissing my feet. You anointed not even my head with oil; she my feet with precious ointment. Her many sins are forgiven, because she loves much. He who is forgiven but a little, loves but a little."

When the evening of the Passover had come, he ate the Passover with his disciples. And, breaking the bread for them, again he told them that he was about to die; but that, despite death, he would be raised up. And he told them that one of those present would betray him, and that the others, when he had been delivered up, would desert him and flee. Then Peter cried out that, though every other man should lose faith, he would remain steadfast. But Jesus replied, "You, Peter? Before the cock crow to make an end of this night, you will deny me." And Peter vehemently declared that even though called upon to die with him, he would not deny him. And so said the others.

And after the Passover had been eaten they went out together to an enclosed olive orchard which was called, because of the winepress which was there, Gethsemane. And leaving the others near the gate, Jesus went on into the grove with Peter and James and John only. And he seemed stunned with depression and deeply distressed, saying to these three, "My soul is encompassed with sadness even to the point of death." And he fell upon the ground, praying that the hour might pass from him, and that the cup of pain he was about to drink might be removed, adding, "Nevertheless, let it be not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

And three times, going to where the disciples were and leaving them to pray apart, he found them each time asleep, for they were very weary. Then, returning the third time he awoke them, saying that it was now time to go forth from the garden.

Even as he spoke, and before they had passed the gate of the garden enclosure, Judas came toward him, and behind a company of men sent from the Temple, armed with swords and clubs. And Judas going up to Jesus, kissed him, which was the sign agreed upon, which would show the one whom they were to arrest. And Jesus, when they had laid hands on him, showed no signs of resistance, also forbidding those with him to use violence in his defense. And as he was led away without resistance, the disciples who had been with him parted from the crowd and fled.

And they took Jesus first to the house of the High Priest, where the chief priests and others of the ruling religious body were gathered together waiting him. These by questioning strove to get from him some incriminating reply, with which they might charge him before the Roman authorities, but before the witnesses they brought against him Jesus was silent. Then the High Priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah?"

And Jesus said, "Whatever I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer."

Again they asked, "Are you then the Son of God?"

And he answered, "You are saying this. But this I say to you, that from this very moment you will be seeing, as prophet and psalmist have said, *The Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming upon the clouds of heaven.*" [*]

Hearing this the High Priest declared with vehement gesture,

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[*] These words are quoted in two Gospels, Luke and Matthew, from Daniel VII. 13 and Psalm 110.

"What need we of any witnesses further? You have all heard these words of blasphemy."

And those who had gathered in the courtyard to look on at the proceedings, hearing him accused and seeing him helpless before his accusers, began to insult and mock him. Peter, who had stolen in among the crowd, being pointed out by several as among those who had been with Jesus, denied with an oath that he knew him, so that when morning had come, and the cock crowed, he remembered the rebuke of Jesus, and was deeply ashamed.

The High Priest and the others, having passed the night in questioning and charging him, determined to bring their charges before the Roman governor, since the messianic hopes were commonly interpreted politically, and had often occasioned tumultuous rebellion against Roman power. They might therefore charge him before the governor with claiming to be the rightful King of the Jews, and in consequence the Romans might execute him, since the religious authorities had no power themselves to put him to death. And the governor, Pontius Pilate, was in the city because of the feast, for always at the time of the great feasts there was danger of popular tumult. So in the morning, when the hour of audience had come, they took Jesus before Pilate, with the charge that he claimed to be the King of the Jews.

And when Jesus was before Pilate, the governor asked him immediately if he were the King of the Jews.

And Jesus answered only with the question, "Do you lay the charge against me?" Further he would make no defense before the witnesses, and Pilate saw that this matter, as the bitterness of his accusers became more and more evident, held nothing against Roman power, but had to do only with some religious difference among the Jews, whose acrimonious sectarian differences aroused more than anything his scorn. And he would have released Jesus. But the leaders would not have it so, charging that if he did not punish him he was no friend of the emperor.

So Pilate, not wishing to stir further trouble in such delicate atmosphere, assented that he might be condemned, but upon the responsibility of his accusers, since he himself had found no crime worthy of death. And Jesus was delivered over to the soldiers as condemned, and they led him to the garrison, where with rough mockeries the soldiers ridiculed one who claimed to be the King of the Jews.

And so Jesus was crucified, and two condemned criminals upon crosses one on either side of him. And when the hour of crucifixion arrived even the tradition of the Gospels does not claim that any of his chosen disciples dared stay near to comfort him, save one, and that the youngest of them all. At the side of Jesus' mother, the latest Gospel recounts, this one disciple remained beneath the cross, stooping to raise her and lead her away when it was finished, and Jesus had rendered up his spirit.

# VIII

So passed Jesus, the gentle prophet of Nazareth, after a public ministry which, even though the less probable claims are admitted, lasted but some months over three years. The shorter period of some months over a year seems more probable, when the smallness of the territory is considered within which it occurred;[1] the quickness with which opposition to him arose, if we may trust the narratives we have; indeed the certainty that a career such as these narratives present must inevitably have risen quickly to its final crisis.[2]

His execution, despite wonders which gathered about it when the personality of Jesus came to have tremendous significance for his followers, probably passed as hardly important among the excitements of the festal gathering. True, he had, but a few days before, had a large and enthusiastic following, but those who were in charge of his execution would hardly have wished to make it a conspicuous event, and those who may have waited for him again to appear in the Temple court after he was already dead had many other interests, at that greatest of Jewish feasts, to quickly obscure the fact of his absence. A prophet, or one who claimed to be, was no strange apparition at the Passover feast. Hopes rose easily amidst this crowd of religious enthusiasts, and fell quickly. It is scarcely to be doubted that even the majority of his followers believed, their high hopes shattered by his arrest, that the light which they had followed had failed them.

He fell a victim, as have so many other prophets in other ages and countries, to two classes predominantly; first, those who were profiting, in power and self-satisfaction, too greatly to be willing to see the sources of their influence and smug content questioned; second, those who, while not so secure in their present, still preferred not to risk the chances of disturbance, which might—who could tell surely?—leave them still worse than they at present were.

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[1] The extremities of the territory possibly touched by the personal ministry of Jesus, if we count Jerusalem, lie a little over one hundred miles apart, north and south, scarcely twenty-five east and west."

[2] The claim for the longer period rests, not entirely but almost so, upon the Fourth Gospel.

That the early Christians, seeing in the death of Jesus, an evil attempt to crush God's truth, should have interpreted the act as particular blindness to the truth, or stiff-necked pride, was natural enough. But, as we of to-day look back over history, realize what even the Greeks, with their remarkable tolerance of free speech and speculation—a tolerance evidenced never more strikingly than by the fact that some of the comedies of Aristophanes were allowed to be given at the time they were—might do to Socrates, we realize that the fact that the opponents of Jesus were Jews was largely accidental. In London we might imagine Jesus being allowed to speak in Hyde Park. In Paris, despite its liberty, he would hardly be allowed to actively remonstrate against the sound of dropping chair-fees, during a high Mass at the Madeleine. In New York! We cannot feel certain that he should not have been in some way implicated in the mysterious death of John the Baptizer, for such personalities are but trouble-making agitators in times of prosperity, and it was worth some pains to cover up the debaucheries and brutalities of the court of Herod. However great may be adjudged the importance of Jesus, his death can be laid against no race. It might be called a law of socially organized humanity that the *status quo* has certain sacred rights, to be protected, even to the point of death, by the organized power of those who profit mostly by it. This law has indeed perhaps this to commend it, that it makes possible the growth of social injustice to a point where, to a large number of people, even an uncertain future which they innately fear becomes preferable to an intolerable present.

But if the death of Jesus, a blow indeed to some but to most of those who knew of it a quickly forgotten incident, seemed destined to end a movement hardly begun, so small and insignificant was the little area it affected, something happened, how long afterwards it is impossible to say, and still the time which passed could hardly have been very considerable, which changed the entire significance of this execution upon the hill of Calvary.

If we follow the Gospel of Mark, now by almost universal consent judged to be the first of the Gospels to reach the approximate form in which it has come down to us, we are told that, when the hour of agony came and apparently all the twelve disciples and the other male followers of Jesus have fled (unless we accept the tradition of the Fourth Gospel, that John the Beloved remained at the foot of the cross with the mother of Jesus) a few faithful women followers, who had come down with the little company from Galilee, watched from far off, and afterwards learned where it was that Jesus was to be buried.

When the Sabbath was passed they went in the evening to purchase perfume to anoint the precious body of him they loved, purposing to go with it the following morning, very early. But, reaching the tomb, something happened to frighten them. The Gospel says that they found the tomb unsealed, and an angel beside the entrance who told them that Jesus was not there, but that he was *risen.*

Oddly enough, if they did so go to the tomb, and if they heard such a message, they told no one of it, *for they were afraid.* So the oldest Gospel reports, and if it ever did say more of the Resurrection than that, what it said has been lost, for the verses following unto the end of this Gospel are, again following almost universal consent, of later addition.

It seems so improbable that anyone, in the growth of a myth, should imagine these women, after having been told that Jesus was risen, should say nothing of it, that one is tempted to believe that in their excited condition they did see *something* to frighten them in the morning half-light.

But, according to the last chapter of the Fourth Gospel, another strange thing happened in the early morning, just at dawn, to the impressionable Peter. The Galilean fishermen went back to Capernaum, and to the fishing which they had left. Having fished all night, Peter saw something along the shore as his boat neared its mooring place. Convinced that it was Jesus, he plunged into the water.

Whether or not some such experience convinced Peter that Jesus had indeed been raised up, was in some sense present among them still, like the question whether or not these women did go in search of the tomb of Jesus that morning after the Sabbath, to meet with something which frightened them, it is impossible to know. This much at least appears certain: very soon after the death of Jesus Peter was back again in Jerusalem, and some of the former disciples were with him, and the message upon their lips was that Jesus had *appeared.*

But to believe that Jesus had appeared to some of those who had been near him in life was not, apparently, at all the same thing as seems to be implied in the resurrection stories we now find in the Gospels we have. Paul *saw* the Lord Jesus, as he tells us himself, making no distinction, except as of time, between his vision and that of any other disciple.[3] Stephen *saw* him, at the time of his martyrdom, according to the Book of Acts.[4] It is even possible that the fact of having seen the Master was taken to be, at the very beginning, the sign of true conversion, since we are told that five hundred saw him at once.[5] And it looks very much as if the story of the Ascension grew out of the fact that, after a certain lapse of time, people ceased to see him, and this failure had to be explained.

It seems almost beyond doubt that belief in some kind of continued presence of Jesus with his disciples was the first rallying ground for the little body of Christians, and if there was a time when the experience of seeing him was at all common, the resurrection stories need no further explanation. To those who had not seen, the seeing of the others must be made good, and it was even to the doubting touch of Thomas.

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[3] Corinthians IX. 1.

[4] Acts VII. 55.

[5] I Corinthians XV. 4-8. This is the first written evidence for the Resurrection, antedating by some thirty years, probably, the earliest Gospel account.

Indeed a *reappearance* of Jesus after his death is a part of all his teaching in anticipation of that event. Nor was the idea of a prophet being *raised up* strange to the messianic expectations of the Jews. It was seen, in the conversation on the road to Cæsarea Philippi, that people were saying that Jesus was Elijah, or some of the other prophets, who had been raised up. The expectation of the followers of Jesus was, in all probability, that he should come *upon the clouds of heaven,* to set up the messianic kingdom, which indeed seems to have been Jesus' expectation. We can imagine their continual looking for him to come in this way. Such indeed in its surroundings was the vision of Stephen—Jesus, not coming to be sure, but seated as the Messiah at the right hand of the throne of God in glory. But so strong was the personal impression of Jesus' character upon those who had been with him that when he *came* to them it was no glorified figure, but the Jesus whom they had known. The nature of the experiences from which the conviction arose is another matter. Psychology, spiritualism and naïve religious faith in the supernatural will have each their theoretical basis of interpretation, and argument is not likely much to influence any of them.

What is most important, for the understanding of the earliest Christian conception of Jesus, is a realization of the fact that about the belief in his reappearance among his followers the Christians first rallied after his death. The conviction that he was indeed the Messiah grew and grew in the mind of Jesus. The conviction that his immediate mission was about to fail was, because of this, a puzzle to him at times. But out of this disappointment grew in him the faith that he would be raised up again after his death, and somehow, but hardly in his teachings alone, this conviction came to be passed on to his followers.

The planting of the faith in the resurrection, working upon the acts of healing which are an inseparable part of his ministry without which its entire historicity can hardly stand, accounts without great difficulty for the growth around his person, soon becoming legendary, of miraculous acts; turning water into wine, feeding five thousand with a few morsels of food, raising the dead. The early Christians are to be commended that this mythical element remained, in the accounts of his life finally adopted as official by the community, as modest of proportion as it did.

Before passing beyond the cycle of ideas contained in the Gospels, however, even though necessary in doing so to jump a considerable period of time to be covered in the next chapter to follow, some words may well be here added about the infancy narratives which appear at the beginning of two of the four Gospels.

Of these infancy narratives there are two elements, separable because each arose in answer to needs or beliefs independent of the other.

At the beginning of the First Gospel is what purports to be the genealogy of Joseph, the father of Jesus or the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus, according as one chooses to judge. In the Third Gospel, just after the story of the baptism of Jesus, and thus separated from the infancy narrative, there appears a somewhat different genealogy, again of Joseph. Both of these genealogies are accommodated, in an entirely external way, to that which is the central purpose of the two infancy narratives, namely, the recounting of the miraculous birth of Jesus from a virgin mother. The Third Gospel adds a parenthetic explanation, "Being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, etc., etc." The First Gospel makes the accommodation in a somewhat different way, "And Jacob (not Heli, as in Luke) begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus."

The obvious purpose (the sole purpose in Luke and the primary purpose in Matthew, of these genealogies) forms a part of that earliest attempt of Christians to prove to Jews who refused to be converted that Jesus was truly the Messiah. Here it was by showing that he was, by reason of the family line of Joseph, truly of the house of David. Matthew's Gospel makes this purpose doubly evident by prefixing to the complete genealogy the condensed form, "The book of the *beginnings,* or generations, of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

It is unnecessary, in our short space, to point out discrepancies in these genealogies. It is enough to note that they do not, even for Joseph, give the same name to his father. Nor need we stop more than to note how plainly it appears that these genealogies were prepared without thought of a miraculous virgin birth, and how awkwardly they are accommodated to such a belief.

Indirectly suggested by the genealogy of Matthew's Gospel[6] we may pause to attend a moment to the question of the *beginnings* of Jesus' prophetic significance, as conceived by the respective authors of the Four Gospels, for in so doing we are taken, with the speed of seven-league boots, over a rapid development of thought with reference to the significance of Jesus' personality.

In the oldest Gospel, Mark, the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the preaching of John, leading hurriedly to the baptism of Jesus. In Luke's Gospel the beginning is pushed back to a miraculous foretelling of the birth of John to his father, followed by a miraculous foretelling of the miraculous birth of Jesus to his mother. In the First Gospel the beginning is, by direct implication, to be found in the old promise of Jehovah to the patriarch Abraham.[7] In the Fourth Gospel, however, a far more daring leap is made. We read, "In *the* beginning was the *Logos* (we translate it *word,* it meant to the Greeks also *reason*) and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. . . . All things were made through him. . . . And the Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us." [8]

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[6] The First Gospel is sometimes here referred to as Matthew's Gospel, that being the name by which it is known in the New Testament. It is not generally considered however to have been of his authorship.

[7] The genealogy of Luke goes back, it is true, to Adam, but with no apparent attempt to trace there a *beginning* of Jesus, unless in the Pauline sense of Jesus as the *second Adam;* "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." I Cor. XV. 22.

History, miracle, prophecy, metaphysics; within a period of less than seventy-five years all these had taken their hand at interpreting the character of Jesus, and, pressed as we are to hurry on to later history, perhaps in no other way could we so briefly comprehend how strikingly this was the case, than in this recital of the beginnings of Jesus, as seen by the four authors of the accepted narratives of the life of Jesus.

The infancy narratives, prefixed to the First and to the Third Gospels, exemplify the growth of legend about the personality of Jesus in its most charmingly poetic form. To realize how truly this is so one has but to read the infancy accounts in some of the rejected gospels.

That of Matthew's Gospel is the less richly developed, consisting of thirty verses, as commonly divided, while that of Luke's Gospel consists of one hundred and twenty-seven. The shorter narrative of Matthew is divided into three parts, of which one only is concerned with the virgin birth of Jesus. In connection with this portion it is evident that the author is interested, not in the virginity of the mother, but in the miraculous birth of the son.[9]

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[8] John I. 1, 3, 13. For comparison the following apostrophe of Reason, or Wisdom, from Proverbs VIII. 22 following.

Jahweh created me
First in the manner of his old creation,
Long aforetime, from earliest days
Was I set up,
In the first beginning,
From ages older than the world.
When there was no depths
Birth was given to me,
Nor any springs abounding in waters;
In time before the mountains were set
Or the hills were born;
Ere he had made the earth,
The open countryside
Or the upper soil of the land.
At the ordering of the heavens
I was there already,
When the bounding circle was drawn
Around the faces of the sea,
When he fastened the clouds from above
And the springs of the deep settled firm.

The second portion of this infancy narrative tells of a visit of *magi* from the East, drawn by a strange star to Palestine in expectation of seeing one born to be King of the Jews. The third part tells of how Joseph took Mary and the infant to Egypt, thus saving Jesus from Herod's attempt to kill his possible successor by putting to death all the male infants in Bethlehem.

Nothing of these two incidents is in any way referred to in the other infancy narrative, and as to the first, the two have this alone in common, that the birth of a son to a virgin is foretold, in one to Joseph, in the other to Mary. But the two narratives have, in addition to the miraculous birth, one other common interest, which is to place the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. Unfortunately the way in which they do this is in each case inconsistent with the account of the other narrative.

But it is apart from our limited scope to trace the inconsistencies of these two infancy narratives, or to recount their content, so well known and easily accessible. Both of them have had a tremendous influence upon the imagination and sentiment of Christians. Hardly the whole remaining New Testament has furnished so much inspiration to the poetic, plastic and pictorial arts of Christendom; not to speak of the centuries of devotion in many forms to the Virgin of whom, were it not for these two narratives, one who knew all the rest of the New Testament and nothing else of Christianity, would never have had a single hint.

To attempt to frame historical hypotheses as to the how and why of the two elements of Christianity's historic faith which center about the mother of Jesus: the miraculous birth of her son, and the warm devotion to her own virginly person, is a fascinating temptation we must lay aside. As to the first it may however be said, in passing now at length beyond the atmosphere of Jesus' life to the early life of his infant community, that two great thinkers of the New Testament were able to frame the loftiest conceptions as to the significance of the personality of their master, to deck him with the robes of divinity, unembarrassed by their ignorance of the fact that he had been born of a virgin.[10] As to the cult of the Virgin, a phenomena with its own particular reasons for existence, of sufficient importance to some souls, it appears, to make her a sufficient cause for belief in her son's miraculous birth, we shall meet that in fuller development later on.

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[9] "And Joseph . . . took unto him his wife, and knew her not until she had brought forth a son." Matthew I. 24, 25.

We began, at the beginning of the chapter second before this, with an evangelist beside the calm waters of the Lake of Galilee. Already we have seen the Messiah, crucified and risen to appear to his disciples, furnished furthermore with a miraculous birth, pushed back in his essential being to ages before the world began to be. But we have seen this in a garb put on when already the community had passed through experiences we have yet to trace, as we turn to consider the first steps of the community of Jesus' followers.

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[10] Paul was almost certainly ignorant of any belief in an unnatural birth of Jesus. If the author of the Fourth Gospel was not equally ignorant, he gives every negative evidence of disapproving it.

# IX

NOT yet had Jesus reappeared in his expected glory, to prove to doubting Jews that he was in truth the Messiah. The followers of Jesus, some of whom at least had returned to Galilee almost immediately after the crucifixion, went up again to Jerusalem. The passage in the first three Gospels referred to by critics as *The Little Apocalypse*[1] is generally taken as an indication that Jesus had made some prediction as to a *coming* which referred directly to that kingdom of God which he preached, but which, by perhaps quoting Old Testament prophecies, turned the minds of his hearers to think upon the catastrophic image of "The Son of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven."[2] A hint as to his enigmatic manner of referring to this *coming* may be furnished by a striking passage in Matthew's Gospel, in which an immediate and continual *coming,* such as that implied in the Parable of the Mustard Seed[3] is strangely and incongruously mingled with Old Testament prophetic reference: The High Priest asked Jesus, with clear reference to certain current messianic ideas, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?" and he answered, "You affirmed it; but I say to you that *from this very moment* you will be seeing the Son of Man seated upon the right hand of the seat of power, and coming upon the clouds of heaven."[4]

This strange mixture of continual and sudden catastrophic *coming* remained among early Christians to an extent which led Paul to speak of Jesus' coming as a *being present* (parousia) and the author of the First Gospel to use the word *parousia* with reference to what he describes as a sudden and unexpected coming.[5] But the lively expectations of the first converts seized upon the more dramatic expectation, and the reason why the Galilean converts went back to Jerusalem after having been somehow convinced of Jesus' presence with them after his death was doubtless their belief that it was in the holy city that Jesus would be seen to descend for the setting up of his kingdom. In daily watching for this event the present age, so soon to disappear, became to them of little importance. Encumbering possessions were sold, the proceeds becoming a common fund upon which the little community lived, a close-knit *fellowship,*[6] most of them strangers in a strange city, their ordinary means of livelihood, the crafts they exercised at home, deserted.

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[1] For the "Little Apocalypse," most fully developed in the first Gospel, see Matthew XXIV. 1-44; Mark XIII. 14-32; Luke XXI. 5-33.

[2] For fuller discussion, Streeter, in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem,* Appendix.

[3] Mark IV. 30-32 and parallel passages in Matthew and Luke.

[4] Matthew XXVI. 64. For O. T. prophecies Daniel VII. 13, Psalm 110.

The leisure therefore enjoyed gave opportunity for concentrated devotion and spiritual preparation for the expected event. Considering themselves as Jews, differing from their Jewish brethren only in the fact that to them had been made known the secret of the Messiah, convinced doubtless that the Jewish opposition to them was sectarian, a seed sown by the Pharisees, they attended diligently the Temple, offering daily sacrifice. In addition they gathered for their own devotions and mutual exhortations. Perhaps they organized, similarly to the synagogue organization.[7] We shall not go far wrong in imagining that such services were of an excited exaltation tending often beyond the bounds of rational worship. They were all spiritual organs of one sort or another. They spoke with the tongues of angels, strange and incomprehensible prophecies. Peter on one occasion apologizes for his coreligionists: "They are not drunken as you may suppose." Imagine a small group of religious enthusiasts, released from all bonds of labor which had to do only with the continued existence of a world soon to pass away, coming together early in the day, words such as Peter himself quotes to explain their conduct upon their lips and in their thoughts, and the character of some of their reunions can be imagined.

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[5] Matthew's Gospel uses this word but four times, all in the apocalyptic passage (chap. xxiv).

[6] The word used in Acts to describe this fellowship denotes their having had things *in common* (*koinonia*) Paul retains the word, but confines it to a spiritual fellowship.

[7] Jackson and Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity,* I, Part I, 304, believes that they were probably so organized; McGiffert, *The Apostolic Age,* 68, believes the contrary. The synagogue was in general a Pharisaic institution, and it may doubted that at the very beginning the Christians chose such a formal organization.

> And afterward it shall come to pass
> That I will pour out my spirit
> Upon all flesh;
> Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,
> Your old men shall dream dreams,
> Your young men shall see visions;
> Even upon the man-servants
> And upon the maid-servants
> Will I pour out my spirit
> In those days.
> And I will show wonders in the heavens,
> And in the earth:
> Blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.
> The sun shall be turned into darkness
> And the moon into blood,
> Before the coming of the great
> And terrible day of Jahweh.[8]
>
> Jahweh will roar from Zion,
> And utter his voice from Jerusalem;
> And the heavens and the earth shall shake . . .
> Afterward shall Jerusalem be holy,
> Nor shall the strangers
> Pass through her any more. . . .
> The mountains shall drop down sweet wine,
> The hills shall flow with milk,
> The brooks of Judah will flow with waters,
> And a fountain shall break forth
> From the Temple of Jahweh,
> To water the valley of Acacias.[9]

So the prophecy he quotes continues.

Doubtless they might have been undisturbed in both their expectations and in the manner in which they kept them alive in daily prayer and exhortation among themselves, had they remained content to keep their hopes for themselves. There were a number of sects among the Jews of the time, differing in minor matters of belief. The essential was to hold fast to the Law of Moses. The two most important sects, for example, held respectively for and against a life after death. Even the Essenes, about whom to be sure little is known, but enough to show that they were unorthodox in many matters both of belief and custom, were tolerated because they upheld strictly the Mosaic law.

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[8] Joel II. 28ff.

[9] *Ibid.*, III. 16ff.

The Gospel narratives do not lead us to believe that Jesus himself ever spoke directly against these Laws of Moses, about the interpretation of which Judaism of his time had built itself; and it is clear that the earliest Christians felt themselves bound to observe it. But there were two circumstances bound in the end to get them into trouble with their Jewish brethren. First, they were convinced of a mission to convert other Jews to their point of view with respect to Jesus, which necessarily involved the charge against some of their most influential leaders, that these persons had rejected and caused to be put to death the true Messiah. Second, in attempting to make good their claim they were led to the Prophets, and gradually it dawned upon some of them that there had always been elements of conflict between the legalistic spirit of Judaism and the fervid imaginative gropings of their poetic leaders after a more personal and emotional basis and sanction for the religious-moral life.

Just how clearly, and with what degree of revolutionary emphasis, this conception was seized it is difficult to judge, as the accounts of it which we have are doubtless colored by the thought of one Saul of Tarsus which was subsequent to the period we now consider. Nevertheless it seems clear that they came to realize this much at least, that it was by no means uncommon, in the religious-political history of their people, to find the prophets of Jehovah rejected and persecuted.

So, with their message upon their lips, preached within the sacred city and the Temple courts, a direct criticism of Jewish religious leaders, and implied criticism of the spirit upon which rested many common beliefs and practices, the little community of Jerusalem Christians was soon in difficulties. On the whole they do not seem at first to have been badly treated, arrested, it would appear several times, and in one way or another let go, admonished to preach no more in public. But what were arrests and persecutions, in the world so soon to pass away, displaced by the Messianic reign of their Master? They continued, making always new converts, and even among the priests.[10]

The crisis of this situation is portrayed, in the Book of Acts, as the first Christian martyrdom, and into the mouth of this martyr, Stephen, are put by Luke, the generally recognized author of this book, the arguments which have been summarized above, tracing the conflict between prophetism and legalism back to Joseph.

> The patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt, and God was with him. . . . Moses was born . . . to whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt. . . . Our fathers had the *tent* of the covenant . . . which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua (to Palestine). . . . But Solomon built him (Jehovah) a *house,* howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made by hands. . . . Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the holy spirit: as your fathers did so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers.[11]

It is immaterial to our purpose whether or not Stephen uttered such words. They are important as showing a direction in which Christianity inevitably tended, and so tending its separation from Judaism could not long be postponed.

But, if Christianity were to hope for a future, something more than a separation from Judaism was necessary. The lines of development for Judaism, already stiffened by centuries of difficulty, prepared in the lines of thought suggested by these vicissitudes for its immediate future and for centuries to come, were already laid down. Christianity, facing the situation of appearing before the world as an independent religion, required a generating principle, about which a systematic organization of faith and practice might crystallize. Jesus had left no written teachings; no body of doctrine. People remembered sayings of his drawn, most of them, from particular occasions which had called them forth. So uttered, such pronouncements were necessarily diffused; as remembered they tended to be even more so. Moreover they were tinged, those of them upon which religious hopes might most easily fasten to build themselves, by the messianic expectations of the Jews. However much they might bear the distinguishing personal marks of a particular human personality, however broadly that personality might touch and color a religion it inspired, personal human qualities pass from personality to personality, singly. The mass imagination must be set in motion by something more concretely patent, clearly stamped; must be prepared by the trade-mark of acquired reputation somewhere vouched for; must see the halo.

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[10] Acts VI. 7.

[11] This passage is extracted from Acts VII. 9-52.

In short, that Christianity might become an independent religion, it must acquire an interpretation of the religious significance of its founder, independent of the religious hopes of another religion, before the devotees of which it had, generally speaking, failed to make good its claims.

That it was soon to have. The author of the Book of Acts, the same Luke who in his Gospel shows himself susceptible to the dramatic and the picturesque, at the end of his account of the martyrdom of Stephen sets the protagonist of the next act of the drama of Christendom, lights directed full upon him, in a corner of the stage. Those who had borne witness against Stephen, and were thus according to Jewish Law required to cast the first stones of condemnation, as they divested themselves for action, "laid their cloaks down at the feet of a young man named Saul." [12]

This Saul, of more correct Hebrew pronunciation Shaul, later of his deliberate choice known by the Greco-Roman equivalent of his name *Paul,*[13] is, with Augustine, Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther, one of the four most striking personalities in Christian history. His peculiar position in this history makes of him the most important of the four.

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[12] Acts VII. 58.

[13] There is another theory which makes of the name Paul a second given name, derived from some connection of his father with one of the great Roman families.

This Saul, otherwise Paul,[14] destined to be he through whose thought and activity Christianity was to arrive at a fully conscious and outspoken breach with Judaism, is remarkable among other things for this, that he was, each in a different sense, with definite legal status, at once a Jew, a Greek and a Roman. By birth a *Hebrew born of Hebrews* [15] he was, according to Roman Law, of the Hebrew nation even in the Greek city in which he was born. He was, nevertheless, a citizen of this Greek city.[16] Furthermore, in consequence of an honor conferred upon, or possibly purchased by, his father or one of his progenitors preceding he was also a Roman citizen, which carried with it rights and immunities of which he availed himself upon several occasions, bringing before him in an intimate way the political and social significance of Rome's widespread power, influencing, we can hardly doubt, his vision of Christianity's universal destiny.

That he was a Greek and a Jew were however of even greater importance. Let us therefore consider a moment, first as more quickly to be disposed of, his Greek environment, as a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, as he himself says, "no insignificant city."

Tarsus was said to have received its name from the fact that a wing of Pegasus had fallen there, when this mythical aeronaut came to grief. Here Alexander the Great caught a bad cold from bathing in the cold water of its river, and hither Cleopatra was summoned by Anthony to a conference of fateful result. Tarsus was a rich and a brilliant city during the period of Paul's life, but for nothing more famous than the fact that it was one of the most important centers of Greek thought. The geographer Strabo, born some sixty years before Paul, says of Tarsus, "So deeply are the people here imbued with zeal for philosophy that they have surpassed Athens and Alexandria and every other place that can be mentioned."[17] Particularly impressive is the list of Stoics who either taught or at one time studied there. The influence of his Jewish training and education are so evident in Paul's thought, and his literary style is so individual, that the direct influence of his Greek environment is hard to assess. He was accustomed to read his Scriptures in the Greek version, his style, though not in accordance with rules of Greek rhetoric, is called by experts good Greek, and he was not unfamiliar with technical terms of Greek philosophy. Finally, his theological conceptions went decidedly toward ideas for which Greek thought had prepared the European world, and in this fact the extent and character of the Greek influence is perhaps most adequately measured. It is not unsafe to hazard the opinion that an early and persistent influence of Greek ideas, pushed below the surface of consciousness by a rigid Pharisee, came surging to the surface, himself quite unconscious of the source, when, from the depths of his own personal religious experience, a conception of Jesus' personality, and a vision of its religious significance for mankind, drew together as the foundation for Christian theology.

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[14] Acts XIII. 9. Before this verse he is spoken of in the Book of Acts as *Saul,* after this verse as *Paul.* To have a Greek name was, in the countries of the East varnished with Greek culture, a common occurrence. It looks, however, as though at a certain time Paul decided to be henceforth known, even to Jews, by his Greek name.

[15] Philippians III. 5.

[16] Acts XXII. 3; XXI. 39.

If it be true that the Greek influence, though great, was largely repressed and unconscious, the contrary may be said of the Jewish influence, which was always and everywhere before his eyes. It can be more easily assessed, and will be better appreciated by recounting some few facts concerning his life.

For his pre-Christian life we have not much to go on, to be sure, except what may be gained by putting together scattered statements made here and there by himself, or about him in the Book of Acts. Little can be said which is not subject to dispute, but the following is probably substantially true.

He was born, at the very beginning of the Christian era, in Tarsus, of well-to-do, if not wealthy parents who had some time before chosen to live outside of Palestine, though still boasting their birth from Benjamin, the beloved among the sons of Jacob the Patriarch, and still maintaining influential relations with Jerusalem, perhaps by reason of their having a daughter well married into a prominent family in the inner religious-political circle. Although numbered among the Dispersion, and in a community where many Jews were tinged with liberal ideas, touched by Hellenic influences, this family adhered to the strict Pharisaic tradition.

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[17] Strabo, 673, referred to by Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land,* 18, and in article Tarsus in *Encyclopædia Biblica.*

These parents had devoted Saul, perhaps their only son, to the calling of a *rabbi,* or religious teacher. For a time, and perhaps as early as his fifteenth year, he was sent to study at Jerusalem under the greatest rabbi of his time, returning afterwards to his home city, marrying and perhaps even becoming a father.

But, underneath these external events, something deeper seems to have happened. A natural, pure-minded youth, intense, impetuous, supersensitive, becoming preoccupied with the search after righteousness, found himself obsessed with a burning conviction of guilt. On one side were the prohibitions, injunctions and condemnations of the *Torah,* the Law of God given to Moses as the pious Jew saw these books. On the other were the sights and suggestions of a rich city of Asiatic sensuality veneered with Hellenic humanism become decadent. The effort of avoidance begot in him a sensitive attention to the prohibited feelings. The Law, with its hedgings and precautions, turned him inward to search for wickedness in himself, and to find it everywhere, in places where, without his fears, it never would have existed.

Though he does not date this experience for us, when much later he describes and analyzes it, our knowledge of human psychology places it almost certainly in late youth and early manhood. The analysis is vivid and penetrating, though obscured by the interplay of abstractions and turgid with the seething ebb and flow of antithesis. A rabbi wrote it, a theologian translated it for us into English, which does not make its purport more clear. With some abridgment and slight paraphrase the text may be made to yield to us a more lively realization of the intensity of this struggle which explains so much of his after life and thought.

He writes, with a recollection so vivid that at times it would seem that he feels himself again placed back in the midst of his gropings and fears:

> I should not have recognized sin, were it not for the Law. Had the Law not said, Thou shalt not lust, I should not have known what it was to lust; but sin, the Law giving opportunity, brought about in me all sorts of covetings. Without the Law sin is dead. And once, without the Law, I was alive. But, with the coming of the commandment, sin came to life again, and I died; so finding that in my case the commandment which was intended to be for life was rather for death. . . . Did a thing itself good become death for me? By no means; rather through the instrumentality of this good thing (the commandment against covetousness) sin was clearly shown to me to be sin, by working death in me. For we know that the Law is of the spirit, while I am of the flesh, sold under sin. . . . For I do not put in practice things I would, but rather do things which I hate. But, doing things I do not wish to do, I assent to the goodness of the Law, so that it is no longer I who do such things, but the sin which dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, no good thing dwells. . . . For I delight in the law of God in my inner self, but in my limbs I see another law, warring against the law of my mind. . . . Wretch that I am, who will rescue me from the body of this death.[18]

This whole passage turns about a desire to be *rid of the body.* This desire was not born in Palestine, but in Greece. Where Paul puts the *Law,* Plato might have put *Reason,* or the Stoics *Conscience.* And it seems difficult to imagine the passage written by one who had not somehow absorbed one of the dominating conceptions of later Greek thought, bound up not only with attempts to solve the problem of conduct, but also with the problem of knowledge and the Greek longings after immortality.

But if Greek philosophy helped Paul to set his problem clearly before his consciousness, his attempt to solve it was distinctly Jewish, and brings us back again to the external aspects of his early life.

Returned to Tarsus after his rabbinical studies, he probably learned a trade, not because of financial necessity, but because the exercise of a trade was enjoined upon all rabbim, who were not supposed to live by their work of teaching. It is clear that, pursued by his conviction of sin, his efforts after righteousness were doubled and redoubled. Born to be a zealot, he burned with the single desire for purity by means of scrupulous obedience to and absorption in the Hebrew law of holiness. Such a task is comparable to that of the ascetic who aims at holiness through fasting. He must eat ever less and less, for hunger breeds appetite, and appetite is sin. Of tremendous energy, of rich and vigorous feeling, Paul must have felt his life penned within an ever more and more restricted circle.

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[18] Romans VII. 7-24.

However, perhaps by the accident of his being in Jerusalem at the time of the preaching and condemnation of Stephen, a field of activity opened. He could fight for God by curtailing energetically the destructive influence of these followers of the Nazarene. Many another aspiring saint has found in persecuting others a saving tap for the release of his strangled energies.

The strange circumstance which marks off the experience of Paul from that more usual among persecuting zealots was that, in a moment of crisis, in a definite shock of vision and conversion, the precise objective character of which lies outside the boundaries of useful argument here, he became convinced that for him salvation lay not in hindering but in furthering the sect he persecuted.

Christianity might be as false as its bitterest antagonist might wish, Judaism as true as its most pious devotee believes, and still it would not be less certain that for Paul this conversion was indeed salvation. Active conflict, more complex and heroically stimulating, more liberating to all his energies of thought and emotion, was before him as a Christian. More deeply and wholeheartedly than any initiate of the mysteries ever had, he felt himself *born again,*[19] and the God in whose blood he found himself remade, was not Osiris or Dionysos, but the Man whom his own

[19] The story of Paul's conversion is most fully told in Acts XXII. 3-21. Also it is told Acts IX. 1-22; XXVI. 11-18. Paul refers to his conversion in I Corinthians IX. 1; Galatians I. 13-17.

coreligionists had caused to be put to death on the outskirts of their own sacred city. It is curious to note that, in very ancient and primitive rituals of sacrifice, the god is put to death by his devotees, that in his blood they may be reborn; and that symbolically interpreted this old belief had most probably found a place in the ritual of the mysteries.

After his experience of conversion Paul tells us that he went away into Arabia.[20] It is generally assumed that he went away to be alone and digest the remarkable thing which had happened to him. This is not improbable, and so much his statement makes certain, that he did not return to Jerusalem to feed there upon what the leaders of the community of Jesus' followers might have to teach. Indeed it looks rather as if he deliberately chose to think out this thing for himself.

Having arrived at some equilibrium he apparently went back, by way of Damascus,[21] where he spent several days with the converts,[22] returned to Tarsus, remaining years without any activities of which we know anything.[23]

In Tarsus another crisis awaited him, that of an inevitable breach with his family associations. Of this breach we know nothing definitely, but there are implications of bitterness in the parting of son and father particularly,[24] one practical result of which seems to have been that Paul, though of a family in easy circumstances, found himself for years afterwards a poor man, dependent for livelihood upon the work of his hands except when, on rare occasions, he consented to accept the assistance of Christians particularly dear to him.[25]

After these silent years in Tarsus he was summoned to assist in the missionary activities in Antioch, a near-by city. Here began

[20] Galatians I. 17.

[21] Galatians I. 17.

[22] Acts IX. 19.

[23] *Ibid.*, IX. 30.

[24] Ephesians VI. 4; Colossians III. 21.

[25] Again, toward the end of his career, Paul seems to have been in easy circumstances, for while a prisoner at Rome he lived in a house rented by himself, which probably further obliged him to pay the expenses of the soldiers set to guard him.

that active career which is traced in the Book of Acts, and in the midst of which the letters were written which, allowing for those of disputed authorship, constitute substantially one quarter of the New Testament, and the historical portions omitted one half.

To follow the missionary activities of Paul is here impossible. They terminated in his arrest in Jerusalem, where, having appealed, as a Roman citizen, for trial at Rome, he was transported there, remained a prisoner for more than a year, and finally, according to very early tradition, died in the persecutions under Nero. The date of his death, however, is a matter of conjecture, and therefore, like so many of the facts of his life, of dispute.

It is difficult, in a few words, to sum up the many-sided personality which expresses itself in his letters. Always a zealot, intense, impressionable, fervid, fluxing everything that entered in the fire of a single idea; a mystic whose thought was enlightened everywhere by his own personal experience, he scarcely himself knew whence came ideas later to influence the molding of his own. Everything which touched him was reformed, fitted into his own experience and mode of thinking before it emerged. Even the facts of the life of Jesus, which he knew well, and upon which his own life was based during his Christian years, are seldom mentioned in his own writings.

Above all a thinker, of whose actions we know almost nothing during nearly ten years subsequent to his conversion, and of whose thought we know nothing until he had been a Christian from fifteen to twenty years, his active energy, once liberated in the service of the community as a leader, touched the life and thought of his coreligionists at every point and displayed every element of his character. We see him patient, pliant, diplomatic and cosmopolitan; uncompromising, stubbornly insistent upon his own point of view, even irascible. He could be proud or humble, and met all classes easily and without either timidity or lack of ease. His affections were warm, and his courtesy had the grace and delicacy of one born to all the refinement of gracious society.

In the midst of his most active accomplishment, displaying continual and multitudinous watchfulness and practical sense, he remained always the zealot and the visionary nevertheless; expressing conceptions which were but half comprehended, even by those who, in other New Testament writings, show themselves most influenced by his thought and personality. There were, however, elements of his thought which were to leave indelible marks upon Christian thought, and with some of these conceptions we shall have to do in the chapter to follow. To see Paul in the most charming aspects of his personality one should read particularly his letter to the Philippians, and his little letter to Philemon.

# X

In the preceding chapters, throughout such portions of them as have directly to do with Jesus, we have had before us the Nazarene Prophet, healing the sick and preaching a winning message of consolation through the Galilean countryside, meeting opposition and failing to meet popular expectations, causing at least enough uneasiness in certain centers of authority to raise positive enmity, in turn inducing trenchant and bitter invective upon his part, finally condemned and put to death, only however to give rise, among his followers, to an assurance that he was alive and with them still, capable of appearing to them, and yet more habitually resident in the heavens, seated upon a throne of glory, waiting the time when he should come again, this time in power not to be mistaken, to judge the nations and the hearts of men, and to set up for the elect an everlasting kingdom.

During his ministry Jesus had been addressed often by the title *rabbi,* sometimes as *master,* which became in Greek without difficulty *lord.* Very seldom, unless in a spirit of doubt or mockery, had he been addressed as *the Christ* (or, to repeat the Aramaic equivalent, the Messiah). Publicly he appears to have been hailed as the *Prophet of Nazareth.* He seems to have referred to himself, at least toward the end of his public career, as the *Son of Man.*

The title rabbi signified a religious teacher, and is most often translated in the text by the Greek word for teacher. The Greek word used when later Jesus came to be known as the *Lord* Jesus Christ might translate the most usual word for the Hebrew Jehovah, or it might denote merely the master of slaves or servants. When used in the Gospel narrative, except in later elements, it partook of the latter significance, a term of respect but not of deity.

Of the word *Messiah* much has already been said. Originally it meant merely *anointed,* and is applied to the Jewish kings, particularly Saul and David, both of whom were anointed for their sacred office. The Old Testament speaks also of Cyrus, of the Patriarchs, and of the High Priest as *the anointed.* Later, as we have already noted, this title came to have a particular significance. *The Christ* is merely the Greek translation of *the Messiah.*

Jesus' apparent references to himself as the *Son of Man* present many difficulties. In an apocalyptic prophecy of the Book of Daniel, of which we have already spoken with reference to the expected coming of Jesus upon the clouds of heaven, the one so seen to come is spoken of as "like unto a son of man." [1] Here the phrase clearly seems to mean that the person so seen to descend was in the form of a man. But later prophecy developed from this the expectation of a judge who was to descend in the form of a man, the chosen Son of Man, kept at the right hand of Jehovah for that purpose until the time of his descent should come.[2] Jesus' use of this title is enigmatic, and was apparently so to those who heard him use it. However, the passage already discussed, in which Jesus answers the demand of the High Priest, would seem to be an indication that Jesus did not take this title to mean that which the High Priest would infer, should he have answered him with a simple affirmative. Moreover, whatever Jesus may have meant in using it, if he did, he clearly did not think of himself in terms of the known uses in Jewish apocalyptic literature. If he used the term, which seems probable, we may assume that he thought of himself as the direct bearer of a message from God to men for their salvation, of which it was an inevitable part that he should be denied of men, and should suffer at their hands.

The three epithets, rabbi, *the* Christ, Son of Man, were meaningless to all except Jews and of them the last was enigmatic even to his closest followers. One only among them outlived the time when Christianity spread beyond Palestine, and that one only in a form that robbed it of its original significance. Without the article *Christ* was preserved, and came to be used by Christians as a part of the name of Jesus. Its preservation may have been a matter of accident, since persons in Asia Minor, confusing the words *the Christ* as still used in the older sense with one of similar spelling and perhaps almost identical pronunciation, began to call the followers of Jesus *Christians,* meaning that they were followers of Jesus the *Good* (krēstos instead of kristos); which appellation was eventually accepted by the community. Jesus became, even for the Jew Paul, *Jesus Christ,* except where, for particular emphasis, he retained the article. So little of theological significance did the name Christ come to have in Paul's writings that when he wishes to emphasize the religious character of Jesus he adds an epithet of deity, referring to him as the *Lord* Jesus Christ.

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[1] Daniel VII. 13.

[2] "The Book of Enoch," specific references in Appendix II of the edition of Charles, 307.

It is more than doubtful that Jesus ever, during his lifetime, was called the Son of God, or that he ever directly referred to himself as such.[3] As a palpable figure of speech, denoting a person or the nation as the special object of Jehovah's care, the filial relation to him was not seldom attributed to the Messiah, or to the Jewish nation. In an almost Platonic sense Wisdom, as in a passage from the Book of Proverbs quoted above,[4] is said to have been present with Jehovah from a time before the creation of the world; and in an Alexandrine Jew of the time of Paul this wisdom, become the Greek *Reason,* or *Word,* is used to denote that attribute of Jehovah, by which he had created the world. However, this *Word* is not clearly conceived as a *person.*[5] Also the *Son of Man* of Enoch may properly be spoken of rather as supernatural than divine. But when once there are brought closely together a *prophet* Jesus who has been raised from the dead, a *divine Wisdom* to whom apostrophes may be written, by whom or which the world has been created, a *supernatural Son of Man* who is to descend from the heavens, an amalgamation of some, if not many sorts, is very likely.

[3] See Dalman, *The Words of Jesus,* chapter entitled "The Son of God."
[4] See note at bottom of page 182.
[5] Morgan, *The Trinity of Plato and of Philo Judæus.*

Here then we leave the Prophet of Nazareth, we leave the Christ and the Son of Man, in an attempt to prepare for the appearance of the SON OF GOD, crossing soon the Hellespont to conquer, in three short centuries, the center of political power in the European world. The vagueness of Jesus' unique relation to God was not allowed to continue. Before the community was fairly started as a Church the *sonship* of Jesus was further defined. Let us turn first to Paul's contribution to this process.

These first efforts toward definition were not, as some we shall later meet, inspired either by intellectual curiosity or by a desire for clear unified theology, to safeguard the integrity of an organized community. They were dominated by the widespread desire for personal salvation so general in the Græco-Roman world, and of such commanding prominence in the individual life of Paul.

In passing we may note that Jesus is never called a *savior* in the first three Gospels, save in the infancy narrative of Luke; and that, with a single exception otherwise explainable,[6] the word *salvation* does not appear in these three Gospels outside this same infancy narrative.[7]

Paul's words, already quoted above, are a direct appeal for salvation: "Wretch that I am, who will deliver me from *the body* of this death!"

It is worth while to dwell a moment upon the italicized words. It has already been suggested that Paul's idea of sin borrows from the Greeks. These words distort the phrase, yet there they are. As a matter of fact Paul uses the word *body* from three to four times as often, in proportion to the extent of his writings, as the other writers of the New Testament. Such preoccupation can hardly be a matter of accident, but shows a concern amounting almost to an obsession. We must note these words, for they are in several ways important. First, because Jews generally looked to see, in the Day of Judgment which had come to be a popular expectation, a resurrection of the body—of that same body of which Paul so eagerly wished to be rid. Second, because it hardly seems that Paul would have been interested in stories of Jesus' resurrection which emphasized the fact that Jesus had reappeared in the same material body which had been crucified and laid in the tomb. But there is still a third more important reason, for which we are not yet ready.

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[6] Here (Luke XIX. 9) the Aramaic word used might have been translated *peace,* and the phrase is a usual form of pronouncing a blessing.

[7] This *infancy narrative* is of course outside the early tradition from which the Synoptic Gospels in general derive, and its author is Luke, for some time a missionary companion of Paul, of whose teaching Luke shows the influence in many places.

To leave Paul for a moment, nothing in the first three Gospels, or in the early chapters of Acts, would lead us to suspect that, for the followers of Jesus, his death had any positive constructive significance, much less a *saving power.* His death was the most violent active evidence of his rejection. It was a failure, redeemed unexpectedly by a resurrection. Peter preaches to the Jews in Jerusalem:

> Ye denied the Holy One . . . and killed the Prince of Life; whom God raised from the dead. . . . I know that you, as did also your rulers, did it in ignorance.[8]

In short, the crucifixion had been a sad mistake, which God had overruled and annulled, not allowing *His Holy One to see corruption.* Suddenly, however, instead of Peter saying to Jews, "Jesus was crucified *by* you," we hear Paul proclaiming to Jews, Greeks, everybody, "Christ Jesus was crucified *for* you";[9] and that, by the suffering upon Calvary, the curse laid upon the bodies of men, from the time of Adam's first sin, had been removed for those who *put on Jesus Christ,* to be raised up to new life with him: "For as in the Adam all die, so in the Christ shall all be made alive."[10] "If then ye have been raised up together with the Christ."[11]

And now we may return to those italicized words, *the body,* to find that they play an important rôle in Paul's conception of the crucifixion and resurrection; no less important than this, that in his conception of crucifixion and resurrection Paul is finally rid of the body. As an aid to salvation he says, "Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature";[12] and again, "If anyone be in Christ he is a new creature; the old has perished; it has become new.[13] Adam is dead (in Hebrew the name of the first man is also the word for man generally). He, the first Adam, is of the earth, earthy, doomed, hung upon the Cross with Jesus, buried. The second Adam is the Lord from heaven, the Christ; "and not I live, but Christ liveth in me."

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[8] Acts III. 14-26.

[9] I Thessalonians V. 10 (the earliest of Paul's letters).

[10] I Corinthians XV. 22.

[11] Colossians III. 1.

The process by which Paul came to see, in the death of Jesus and his rising, the accomplished drama of salvation is hidden from us, and is likely to remain so, since the earliest of his works which we have was written when the conception was already fully formed, when already for more than fifteen years he had been a Christian. What we can say is that the conception of the Christ crucified was strange and revolting to the Jew; also that Paul could not have been ignorant of the symbolic death and rebirth which played its part in the mystery religions; finally that this conception solved a problem which had long troubled him. We must not believe that he, any more than devotees of the mysteries, believed himself actually to have died and risen again. He died and rose, as the initiate to those mysteries, mystically. And from thenceforth Christianity could offer to the European world a savior who, like Dionysos and Osirus, had died and risen again, and in whose death and resurrection his worshipers might participate.

Participation was however less simple than in the mysteries. First, ritual had come in the latter for the most part long before the symbolism of salvation had been superimposed. Christianity had itself precedents for two, and soon three types of ceremonial ritual, all however too simple and too new to be broadly impressive. There was the ceremony of *laying on of hands,* born in the community of Jewish ancestry, and probably in theory a means of disseminating the holy spirit[14] which on that day of Pentecost had lighted upon the head of the first Christians in Jerusalem.

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[12] Galatians VI. 15.

[13] II Corinthians V. 17.

[14] The passage quoted above about the "tongues of fire" says specifically that "they were all filled with holy spirit," not *the* Holy Spirit.

There was the *breaking of bread* and the blessing of the *communal cup,* the former a traditional part of the Jewish meal, the two having become commemorative of the Passover eaten by Jesus with his followers before his death. Finally, and very soon, *baptism,* apparently rejected by Jesus as a means of preparation for the coming of the kingdom, stole back again into general practice.

But this was not all. Jesus was no mere mythical personage. There remained of him a clear tradition of moral precept and example. To be found in Christ was to be his imitator,[15] and he who claimed to know him and still did not keep his precepts was a liar.[16]

So Christianity had been provided with a *savior* and a means of salvation; and the dominance of this desire for salvation is evident in the earliest works of Christian art, which evidences at the same time the community of Christians and pagans in this desire.

The sentiment of Christians, at the beginning, was hostile to any representations of its object of worship, this hostility having been naturally inherited from the Jews. However images symbolizing the hope of life after death were common upon pagan tombs, and Christian tombs did not long remain undecorated. The hope of immortality could be expressed without portraying either God or Jesus directly. By the end of the second century Christian cemeteries existed throughout the Empire. It was natural that Christians should have wished to be buried together, and in addition to this natural desire burial societies were common, had their recognized form of organization, and for a time the Christian communities in some places apparently took advantage of this form of legal organization. Also their cemeteries were of appearance similar to those of the pagans, and at times the same artists apparently worked at the decoration both of Christian and of pagan cemeteries.

It is therefore less surprising than it might seem, since there was so much of reason why Christians should have followed, so far as their religion allowed, prevalent customs, that some of the symbolic forms used upon pagan tombs to represent the hope of salvation and of immortality were borrowed by Christians. The myth of Cupid and Psyche, for example, was borrowed by them, the kiss of Cupid taken as symbolical of resurrection and eternal happiness. Nevertheless such a habit had its dangers, and it is not impossible to find, upon Christian tombs, bacchanalian scenes, the sense of which upon a pagan tomb may best be summed up in the Epicurean tomb inscription quoted by Paul, "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die"; or the *torch reversed,* which signified that death was the end of everything.

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[15] Philippians III. 9, 17.

[16] I John II. 4-6.

Christianity developed, however, a symbolism of its own, partly borrowed, with a significance given to the stories by Christianity, from the Old Testament (Daniel preserved in the den of lions; the Arc of Noah) or gleaned from its own Gospel (the *lamb* representing Jesus' atoning sacrifice; or the Good Shepherd, drawn from a rhetorical figure quoted from Jesus in the Fourth Gospel). Before the end of the second century someone hit upon the anagram drawn from the Greek word for the *fish;* its letters standing for the initial letters of the sentence in Greek, meaning, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." This symbol outdid all the others in popularity. However the Christians were not all of them able to resist the crudest type of idolatric use of this symbol, and we find figures of the fish, carved in ivory, crystal or mother-of-pearl, intended apparently to be worn about the neck, as amulets to preserve the wearer from danger or fro mevil spirits.[17]

So much for the savior, but, except for the analogy of old beliefs in sacrificed gods whose death and resurrection were participated in by the devotees, Jesus, as a savior, was not necessarily divine. In the thought of Paul a further process of argumentation was necessary in order to provide a divine person, the Son of God.

This argument went back again to Paul's belief that sin and death were inextricably intertwined. For Paul, no sinner ever could have triumphed over death. The resurrection shed its light upon the crucifixion. Sin brought death, and sinlessness alone might overcome it. The resurrection therefore proved the sinlessness of Christ, and made him not altogether a man, since all men were sinners. But it did more than this. Being sinless he could not have died for his own sin; therefore he must have died for the sins of others. But again, since sin triumphed in all human bodies, Jesus must have been, even while he still trod the fields and highroads of Galilee, of nature other than man—divine, the Son of God.

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[17] For Christian art during this period the author has used Brehier, *L'Art Chrétien,* chap. i particularly.

So his thought naturally traveled, and though it need not necessarily have so traveled, those who looked to Jesus as a savior very naturally rested surer in their hopes, proportionately as greater power and dignity were ascribed to him.

None the less this assurance was not yet perfect. The assumption of baptism was that it removed the curse of Adam, man's inherited sin, and further all sins committed previous to baptism. From this point not everyone could follow Paul, convinced of having been as a brand miraculously snatched from the burning; saved by the free and gracious gift of God, although a sinner undeserving; maintained constantly in a new life, large and free with the fullness of Christ, who was at work in him. Many for a long time preferred to postpone baptism until a point as near to their death as they might safely risk. Others wished a rule of life, by which they might remain in the state in which baptism left them; wished to know what to do, and what not to do, in order that their salvation might remain sure.

For such Jesus became the author of a new way of life; promulgator of a new law superseding the law of Moses, and deriving its greater authority from the divinity of Christ. Moses had been after all but the servant of God, but the new law had been given by his Son.[18] The speculative might proceed from this point to make of Jesus something more than the author and protagonist of this new *law of* liberty.[19] For such he might be further the

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[18] This argument may be followed in the first four chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

[19] James I. 5.

*mediator* in this new arrangement (covenant) between God and Man; a High Priest who, through his suffering and in virtue of his human understanding, might mitigate divine justice.[20] But most people were sure to ask what they were to *do,* what, in concrete brevity, the religion of this new sort was.

Paul had imagined it as *love,* further explained as a disposition that was long-suffering, kind, not envious or vain, modest, unselfish, even-tempered, etc.[21] But many may be imagined to have asked, "What is a disposition anyway, and who cares for that? Tell us what we are expected to do." Even such a definition as that ascribed to the Apostle James remains a bit vague in the latter part: "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." [22] The most definite part about widows and orphans appears to have been rather scrupulously obeyed, they becoming the community's special care. But in order to provide a fuller prescription manuals of conduct appear to have been drawn up very early, some perhaps antedating the earliest book of the New Testament. An early Christian work, known as the *Didache* (or Teachings of the Apostles) embodies a still earlier manual of precepts apparently entitled *The Two Ways,* which began, "There are two ways, one of life and one of death," and then continued by setting down the commandments to love God and your neighbor, with other precepts drawn from the traditional teachings of Jesus.

When substantially all the narratives, letters and tracts which constitute the present New Testament had been written from thirty to forty years, the Fourth Gospel was written. It moves in a fundamentally different sphere of ideas, and has been thought to consciously correct certain elements of the synoptic tradition.[23] Whatever historical value this Gospel may have, its elements of tradition, the words even which are put into the mouth of Jesus, have passed over and into the author's guiding interests and ideas, have merged, and emerge reminted. What Jesus most often teaches has here to do with the nature of God, with his own nature, and with the character of the relationship between God and Man. Here the most important miracles recounted do not so much help men as manifest the power of the Father in and through the Son. Here the longest passage of discourse put into the mouth of Jesus tells his followers of the after-life prepared for them, and promises a *Comforter* who, after his own departure, will be sent to continue with them and "guide them into all the truth." [24]

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[20] Hebrews IV. 14-16 especially. The mediator idea becomes later mingled with the sacrificial, making, as also in some forgotten ceremonies of olden time, priest and victim a single person.

[21] I Corinthians XIII. 4-8.

[22] James I. 27.

[23] Such indeed is a thesis of Abbot's, *The Fourfold Gospel.*

Of a savior or salvation this Gospel has practically nothing to say. Of *truth* it has much to say.[25] The clear implication is that to know the truth is salvation; or more specifically, that to know the Son, the incarnate Logos, is to find, not the truth only, not the way of living merely, but the substance of life itself.[26]

This Gospel lays down the thesis that God is spirit, and since He is spirit He cannot be seen, except in this sense, that he who has seen Jesus, to recognize his spirituality, has seen *the Father.*[27] As a metaphor God is also referred to as "light," and Jesus as "the light of men"; [28] and the "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"; [29] which had "appeared in the darkness, and the darkness had not comprehended him." [30] The reception of Jesus is set forth as a test. Though darkness as well as light is of God, light alone apprehends the presence of light, and all who, by accepting Jesus, are proven to be the children of light are given power "to become the children of God." [31] The Comforter will be sent to them, and they will be guided into *the whole truth.*[32]

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[24] John XVI. 13.

[25] This Gospel constitutes less than one-tenth of the New Testament. Its use of the word *truth,* with its derivatives, constitute more than one-quarter of the total in the entire Testament.

[26] "I am the way, the truth, and the life (John XIV. 6).

[27] "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John XIV. 9).

[28] John I. 4 (see also Matthew V. 14).

[29] *Ibid.,* I. 6.

[30] *Ibid.,* I. 5.

[31] *Ibid.,* I. 12.

[32] *Ibid.,* XVI. 13.

Such doctrine is mysticism of a generally intellectual caste, and not suited to be popular. It opens also too free a way to prophecy by unauthorized persons, and may raise questions as to whether the "light" so largely present in Jesus is not, in a measure, present at least in all who accept him. The answering of such questions may lead toward pantheism, and to even more serious embarrassment to order and authoritative doctrine, and to the established power of an organized church. But after all its influence was to be far less profound or grave at the outset. What Christianity was chiefly to learn from this Gospel, on the authority of one whom Jesus loved, and who had "leaned upon his breast," [33] was the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, and the Logos by whom the Father had created the material universe.

Here then we have, within a period which goes no farther than the first quarter of the second century, the beginnings of Christian dogma. The Lord Jesus Christ is clearly the Son of God, existent before the world was made; who had by his death saved mankind from the otherwise inevitable penalty of sin; who was with his followers; who had given to them a way of life; and through whom those enlightened by faith in him might see God, and live in communion with him.

We have also the Christian conception of *faith,* as a consciousness of new life, as an incentive to conduct leading to life eternal, as the acceptation of an undefined oneness of the Son with the Father, in the sure conviction of which God was revealed to the enlightened soul. As to faith in amulets, this is so much older than Christianity, so much younger than yesterday, that we need not further comment upon it.

Finally, as a tiny germ, we have the inevitable tendency, as speculation about the facts upon which Christianity was based began, to differentiate among various interpretations of these facts, to formulate in some body of truth, a standard of interpretation, and to put upon this formulation the stamp of authenticity and authority. The faith once for all delivered to the saints was as yet far from clearly defined, and there were still inconsistent variation among those who spoke most authoritatively for Christians; but the practical need for a creed had been envisioned dimly by those who wrote the two epistles quoted above. Christians were beginning to ask, "What shall I believe about the Son of God and his Salvation?" When people had begun to ask this question the creed sought for was, in the question itself, *en embryo.*

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[33] *Ibid.,* XXI. 20.

# XI

It should not, however, be imagined that the influence of the personal character of Jesus was lost by reason of the theological development we have thus so briefly sketched. Early in the second century the four Gospels, in approximately their present form, had become generally known, together with other sayings believed to have been his. His words and his sufferings[1] were held continually before the eyes of Christians. Those second-century writers known as the Apostolic Fathers abound in quotations of what purported to be Jesus' words, with exhortations to conduct inspired by his precept or example. Again and again, after the manner of Paul, there are long lists of virtues to be cultivated, sins to be avoided. The virtues are those inspired by reflection upon the life and teachings of Jesus. Against wrath they were to be unresisting, against pride humble, against fierceness gentle; not zealous to imitate by retaliation, but zealous imitators of the Lord, vying with one another as to who should suffer the greatest wrong, who should be defrauded or despised.[2] The life of Jesus was particularly of value to these Christians, because it had been a life of suffering, rejection and persecution, and as such fitted to console those who found themselves living in a hostile world.

For the world was hostile, and the whole temper of their lives must be adjusted to a hostility against which direct resistance was worse than futile. First they were obliged to share in the popular misconception and hatred of the Jews, of whom even the unusually well-informed Tacitus could say that what Romans considered sacred they considered unholy, and what Romans abominated they permitted,[3] and the exclusive claims of whose faith seemed to pagans of that age, becoming more and more tolerant of all religions, insufferably arrogant. But Judaism made few converts, its devotees kept their personal and religious lives to themselves, and when the Temple had been destroyed (A.D. 70) they ceased to be troublesome politically. With the Christians the case was different. Titus, knowing the Christians in Jerusalem, may have hoped that what he saw as a sect of the Jews would also become powerless, or disappear, with the destruction of the Temple; but it soon became evident that this fact had no deterrent effect upon their growth. Christianity continued to make converts, and with each new convert social inconveniences were liable to arise. Husbands complained because their wives had been infected by the new faith. Masters found Christians among their slaves. In parts of Asia Minor the sacrifices of the pagan temples were even affected, and those who traded in sacrificial animals or religious images saw their commerce hurt. Imagine what would happen if suddenly to-day a large and growing number of people banded together, resolved to refuse their patronage to any commercial establishment organized in the form of a corporation. Economic interests were touched, and the imperial government was almost as tender in its care of such interests as are the governments of to-day. Moreover these Christians were vexing in their personal attitudes. They would not meet insult with retaliation, and seemed to possess some mysterious source of assurance and consolation. Was it not magic that they practiced, revenging in some hidden way while openly so humble? So any public or private misfortune might be laid at their doors. "If the Tiber rises, if the Nile does not rise, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, famine, or pestilence . . . the Christians to the lions."[4]

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[1] "Giving heed to his words, ye laid them up diligently in your hearts, and his sufferings were before your eyes." St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, in translation of Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers,* 58.

[2] Epistle of St. Ignatius to the Ephesians, 10.

[3] Tacitus, *Histories,* V, iv (Profana illic *omnia* quae apud nos sacra; rursum concessa apud illos quae nobis incesta).

Indeed the first official persecution of the Christians of which we have reliable knowledge seems to have arisen through the utilization of this popular hatred for the purpose of making them the scapegoats in a moment of public catastrophe. Whether or not Nero was himself guilty when the great fire destroyed a large part of the city of Rome (A.D. 64), it was at least whispered about that the guilt was his, and it proved convenient, and for a time effective, to charge this fire against the Christians, who not only removed popular attention from the Emperor but served, as victims in the arena, to amuse the crowds.

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[4] Tertullian.

This outburst of persecution, so different from the habitual policy of Rome with respect to strange religions, which even when proscribed were usually left alone as a private affair of the worshipers, became a precedent and settled into a political policy. By reason of the *name* itself a Christian became an outlaw,[5] subject to the same procedure of punishment as that accorded the bandit. It lay within the power of a provincial governor, without specific trial to show some crime committed, to put to death anyone who professed to being a Christian.

However the wildest popular charges against Christians—that infants were offered as sacrifices in their rituals, that they were guilty of sexual abominations—could not permanently be believed, and the government, which acted certainly at times in order to satisfy popular prejudice with regard to them, was willing to keep in abeyance the principle that the profession of Christianity was a crime punishable by death. Pliny is instructed by the Emperor Trajan that, although the crime of professing Christianity is properly punishable by death, he is to take no steps except where charges are formally brought by witnesses who do not hide under anonymity and that he is not called upon himself to search them out for punishment.[6]

This abatement was, however, of no permanent character. Underneath, and of deeper significance than popular misconception and prejudice, the administrative forces saw a more potent menace to Roman authority: the rapidly spreading and continually more closely organized body of Christians, the Church.

Among the conceptions sprung from the mind of Paul, and out of his broad experience in inspiring and directing the organization and early growth of Christian communities, was that of the Christian Church. This is by no means to deny that, in a prophetic form, as a broad vision of the future of the kingdom of God, Jesus looked upon his followers as knit together in a common faith, a common hope, and a common task. However, community of faith, even though extended beyond the bounds of nationality or race, could hardly mean to the Jew all that citizenship had meant to Greek political thinkers, or that social unity had come to mean to the Roman political mind, struggling to knit together the Empire with some effective bond of common aim and sentiment. In rare moments the Jewish prophet had seen all nations joined together in the worship of Jehovah. Jesus added to this transcendent religious bond the interweaving cords of mutual brotherly love, not that the ideal was strange to Judaism, but an emphasis upon it such as in the parable of the Good Samaritan swept aside religious difference; and his neglect of customs, such as washing the hands before eating, set the duty of free intercourse above religious injunction, and was revolutionary.

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[5] To *suffer for the name* was for long among Christians the usual term for martyrdom.

[6] The correspondence of Pliny with Trajan, of which that relative to the treatment of Christians forms a part, was later, with the consent of the emperor, published, and has been preserved as a part of his literary works.

But this ideal of human brotherhood emphasized by Jesus, which bore fruit in the early communistic experiment among Christians in Jerusalem, in this impractical scheme partly inspired by the expectation of an early end of the existent order, was again conceived in a thoroughly imaginative spirit, opportunistic in its meeting of the present moment, and taking little thought as to the human factors involved. It was otherwise with Paul.

Paul, as has been said, was at once a Jew, a Greek and a Roman. He had seen life from the standpoint of the well-to-do and of the poor. In the course of his missionary activities he had become a much traveled man. He had organized and guided several communities of Christians, knew well the human factors involved, where to praise, how to blame, and something of what might be reasonably expected. He also knew, and had reason to be grateful to, the far-flung system of law and political organization of the Roman Empire. From the time when he began to think about the community of Christians in its collective capacity, he viewed the question in a statesmanlike way.

The community of Christians, spoken of already by him as the *churches* in the various cities, and perhaps also, as joined together, the Church, was an organism, a *body,* of which individual Christians were the organs, the *limbs.* As different limbs of the body have different functions, so different members of the Church have different duties in the collective life, the performance of all of which are essential to the health of the body.

Such a conception of society is so familiar to us to-day it calls for no comment. Indeed so far Greek political thought might have gone with him. In practice, however, the Greeks had not succeeded in building up an empire upon this principle; while Roman polity had never even attempted to realize it. The Roman Empire had begun with the memory of some unfortunate social-political experiments immediately behind it. It had established peace and orderly conditions under which its higher classes had been able to become rich. It had undertaken some poor relief, not constructively, but as a means of avoiding social discontent and disorder. In principle it left people so far as possible alone in their social and economic capacities, the government and well-placed individuals taking toll, so far as possible without killing the goose which laid the golden egg of individual industry. Roman polity was a patchwork, based upon the institutions of a restricted oligarchy, the emperor in theory its chief administrative officer, about whom administrative machinery, formed to meet the exigencies of practical problems as they arose, was grouped. It lived on, in a true sense in fear of its slaves, in fear of its poor, in fear of the army upon which peace and the extension of power were based. All these classes had to be paid to be kept quiet; the slaves with the hope of freedom, the poor by doles of food and amusement, the army by increasing wages from decade to decade, and large bounties in times of victory.

In theory the Christians, organized according to the theory of Paul, were strong in their feebleness, while the Roman Empire, throughout the second century, was revealing more and more clearly its social-economic weakness underneath its material and administrative strength.

But this conception of the organic relation of the various members to the community by no means exhausted Paul's theory of the Church. Paul was a Jew, and it was not strange to him as a Jew to think of the community of Christians as knit to their God by a particular bond of love and care, even at times when they were in the midst of persecution and suffering. As a Roman citizen, too, his eyes may often have fallen upon reliefs or paintings in which sat, side by side upon a throne, Rome, deified as a goddess, and the emperor, become divine as the head of the political community. So for Paul, the Jew, the Roman, the mystic and the statesman, God in the person of His divine son was more than a protector, more even than a father. The Lord Jesus Christ had not only founded the Church; he remained its divine head, fed it continually with his body and blood. It could be conceived not only organically as *his body,*[7] but might be thought of as *his bride.*[8] Without the Church the individual Christian was nothing. In it alone he could find completeness; was without it but a limb cut off from the head and unable to function, his nerve of spiritual energy severed, dead to the eternal purposes of God.

So the Church was no mere organization of the energies of individual Christians. It had, somewhat as Rome, which might be represented as a goddess seated upon a throne, a mystic unity and purpose. It existed, not as the state for Greek political thought, as a means whereby might be furthered the spiritual development of the individual citizen. It existed for the glory of God, as the body of Christ, a part of God's purpose of *buying back again for himself* all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens.[9] Early in the second century we read that the Church was "created before all things—and for her sake the world was framed."[10]

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[7] Colossians I. 24. [8] Ephesians V. 28-32. [9] Colossians I. 20.

[10] *The Shepherd of Hermas* (a work of unknown authorship among the Apostolic Fathers), Vision II, 4.

A social body so conceived might command the absolute allegiance of those adhering to it. This was something Rome was never able to do with the Imperial Cult, the sacrifices, prayers and feasts of which were but a thin religious veneer covering a political institution. The Christian allegiance to the Church so conceived cut across all national boundary lines and loyalties, recognized an intrinsic and functional value in all its members, engaged their religious emotions completely by lifting the common hope into a realm in which there could be no immediate conflict of interest, and doing with growing scope and effectiveness something the Empire found it more and more necessary to do; taking care of the materially unfortunate.

In other words there was growing up outside the state, and of purpose quite aside from those of the state, the very sort of sacramentally bound union of citizens of the Empire which Rome had, even before the beginning of the Christian era, attempted to establish. The religious bond was essential to a political state of that period. Religion had been, in all the nations of which the Empire had come to consist, an affair of the state; and among none was it more felt to be so than by the Romans themselves. Toward the end of the fourth century a Roman senator, addressing an appeal to a Christian emperor, speaks still of the Vestal Virgins as "devoting their chastity to the public safety, to assure to the eternal existence of the Empire protection from on high." [11]

The Roman Empire, having disrupted many religious allegiances, had attempted to establish the Imperial Cult to which we have already referred, among the many religions that it tolerated the only one to which it demanded at least the form of devotion. For a time the cult had some success. It was not in accordance with the traditions of the Romans themselves to worship a living emperor, but the cult was adapted to their tradition. In some provinces the success was conspicuous; the East being accustomed to see their soveriegn as divine, and the Gauls welcoming in the cult the immediate material advantages which came to them with the establishment of the Roman dominion. But already the Emperor Hadrian, in the early second century, found in his travels about the Empire how little of a hold this cult had upon the people. The comparative ineffectiveness of the imperial religion, when contrasted with the strong bond which knit together the Christians in various portions of the realm, could not but render it more odious to the imperial authorities that these Christians should refuse homage to the religion which had been instituted at Rome by Augustus, nurtured in the colonies as a religious basis for the Empire, and which in Asia and in Gaul had not been unsuccessful at first. The success of these Christians in enthusiastically maintaining an organization with adherents from Asia Minor to Spain became too evident to escape the observation of the administrative system, and it was perhaps for this reason more than any other that the policy of persecution was so long maintained. Active efforts of repression never permanently ceased until the very time when Christianity was about to be furthered by Constantine as the official religion of the Empire.

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[11] De Labriolle, *Histoire de la Literature Latine Chrétienne,* 361.

In short, Christianity was prescribed, as one excellent authority asserts, "Not as a religion, but as interfering with that organization of society which the Empire inculcated and protected."[12] Another, and better known centemporary historian, has written a volume to show how the organized passive resistance of Christians was an important factor in the eventual fall of the Empire."[13]

Rome's efforts of repression were particularly ineffective because Christianity was prepared beforehand against persecution. This expectation awaited the community before its birth, not in the career of Jesus alone, but in the example of the Jews, impressed upon Christians by their study of the Old Testament, which at the outset picked out events and prophecies connected with suffering and persecution for the light they threw upon the career of their Master.[14] Following this, Paul, the one most important personage for the early development of Christian thought, empha-

[12] Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire,* 372.

[13] Ferrero.

[14] Jesus was early identified with prophecies concerning a *suffering servant* of Jehovah, spoken of in the works of the Second Isaiah. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spittle," Isaiah L. 6.

sized the suffering of Jesus and, bidding Christians to *put on* Jesus Christ, naturally he bade them partake of his suffering.

All these things together prepared the Christians to glory in suffering for the sake of their faith. Had not Jesus said, "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"?[15] Had not Paul gloried in his sufferings? "Are they ministers of Christ? . . . I more . . . in prisons more abundantly, in beatings above measure, in deaths often. . . . Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned."[16]

So persecution became a strengthening force rather than the contrary. It cut off those whose adherence would have been a source of weakness; made of martyrdom the most certain preparation for salvation, indeed to such a point that the time came when Christians must be warned against the spiritual temptation which might rest in too eagerly seeking it. Ignatius, a series of whose letters, written while journeying to Rome for trial, have come down to us, writes again and again of the expected martyrdom. In one place he writes:

> Of my own free will I die for God, unless ye should hinder me. I exhort you, be ye not an unseasonable kindness to me. Let me be given to the wild beasts, for through them I may attain unto God. I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread (of Christ). Rather entice the wild beasts, that they may become my sepulchre and may leave no part of my body behind. . . . Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not so much as see my body.[17]

Stories of martyrdom became, as it were, a food of the Church. They accumulated horrors and surrounding miracles as time went on, and fed the imagination of the Christians of the Middle Ages centuries after. One of the earliest of these stories is of particular interest because it shows not only the temper of martyrdom in a more sober form, but also, as written by an eyewitness or one deriving his information directly from such a person, the germ of miracle is clearly perceptible. It is the story of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who died in 155 or 156.

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[15] Matthew V. 10.

[16] II Corinthians XI. 16-33.

[17] Letter of Ignatius to the Romans, par. 4; to be found in any edition of the Apostolic Fathers.

This story, told in a letter in which, preceding the account of the circumstances, we read, "Blessed and noble are all the martyrdoms which have taken place according to the will of God," is as follows:

The torturing of less important persons in the local community of Christians having effected no check upon the faith, the cry went up, "Let search be made for Polycarp." Hearing of this the bishop wished to remain in town, but was persuaded to go into hiding at a near-by farm, where for three days he was in an ecstatic trance, during which he had a vision and awoke to say that he must be burned alive.

The search persisting he went away again to a second farm, and the searchers, arriving where he had been, found two slave boys, from whom they forced a confession as to his new hiding place. Going there they found him in bed, but hearing that they had come he went down and conversed with his captors, who were astonished to find him so old, and wondered why such pains had been taken to put to death one who must in any case soon die.

Polycarp then ordered a dinner for his captors; whatever they might wish to eat or drink, asking for himself an hour, that he might pass it in prayer, and taking in fact two hours, while those who had taken him repented to have come out against one so old, so that when they had him in the carriage which was to take him away they asked him what harm there was in saying that Cæsar was Lord, offering incense to the Emperor, and thus saving himself, persistently seeking a way by which they might free him. But against their persistence he was firm, even to the point where he angered them, and they began to threaten and made him descend from the carriage in a manner so rough that he bruised his shin.

As he was entering the stadium a voice, from whence he knew not, cried to him, "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man." Again he confessed Christianity, and again they tried to dissuade him, saying, "Swear by the Genius of Cæsar; repent and say, Away with the atheists." Polycarp then cried out, "Away with the atheists." They urged him further to swear by the Emperor and revile the Christ, he answering, "Eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?"

The proconsul said, "I have wild beasts here, and will throw you to them." Polycarp answered, "Call for them." Then the proconsul said, "Since you spurn the beasts I will burn you to death," and Polycarp replied that he might do as he wished.

After this it was announced publicly in the stadium that Polycarp had confessed to being a Christian, and the crowd cried that the wild beasts be loosed. Since the games had ended this was unlawful. Then they shouted that he should be burned alive, the crowd scattered in search of fuel, gathering it from the baths and from the workshops.

The pile having been made Polycarp took off his outer garments, loosened his girdle, and wished to remove his shoes for himself, which he did not often do since so many of his Church were always eager to serve him in this way, that they might touch his flesh. Afterwards, when they were about to nail him to the stake he urged them not to do so, as he hoped for strength to stay in the fire without being fastened; so instead they tied him to the stake. When he had been given time to pray the fire was lighted. And the fire, with the appearance of a vault, or like the sail of a vessel filled with the wind, made a wall about his body.

Then, seeing that his body could not be burned, they ordered an executioner to stab him with a dagger, and when this was done the blood, rushing out, extinguished the fire.[18]

One is tempted to believe that the haste of the crowd had interfered with the building of an effective fire, since an executioner was apparently able to traverse it safely, for the purpose of poniarding Polycarp; but not unnaturally under the circumstances the failure of the fire was interpreted miraculously, and later someone added another touch; a dove was seen to emerge, with the blood, from the dagger wound. The particularity with which simple unimportant circumstances are recounted, together with the very early and persistent references to this letter, make it most probable that, with very slight interpolation later, this account is that of one very close to the actual event, and the most accurate we have of an early Christian martyrdom.

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[18] This story to be found in the "Letter of the Smyrnians" to be found in any edition of the Apostolic Fathers.

But martyrdom, however much it might arm the Church against persecution by making its punishment a means to immediate salvation, was not sufficient to make of it an effective institution. Organization grew, not only within the separate churches in the various cities from East to West, but the bond between the communities became constantly more close. Here again the influence of Paul was very important, since he himself had founded or had assisted in founding many of them, and with those which he knew personally he kept in touch, as his letters, several of them written while a prisoner in Rome, abundantly prove, exhorting and advising them in their local difficulties, and keeping them in touch with their coreligionists elsewhere.

The first community, that in Jerusalem, had its natural authoritative heads, the immediate disciples who had been closest to Jesus himself. Their authority was indeed accepted in the later communities, and might have been more completely dominant had it not again been for Paul, who claimed for his conception of Christianity a personal inspiration no less authoritative than theirs, in no uncertain words:

> Paul, an *apostle,* not by the instrumentality of men, or through any man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father. . . . For I make known to you, Brethren, that the gospel which I have preached to you is not according to any man, for I did not receive it from any man, nor was it taught me, but it was revealed to me by Jesus Christ.[19]

This independent authority of Paul, not won without a moment of active controversy with the apostles who had gained their authority from Jesus in the flesh, freed the community, not only doctrinally from adherence to Jewish customs, but it decentralized the Church, and gave room for development to manifest itself in the separate communities, and rendered each community independent of the others. So they grew, subject to no central authority other than that of the accepted gospel, each looking with respect to the *elders,* in faith or in years, among them, and appointing its *deacons* to assist in the practical task of serving the poorer members out of the alms of the more fortunately placed; each community listening, as it chose, to itinerant missionaries who might come among them to preach, even to those who might be charged, by the Jerusalem Church, or by Paul, with disseminating false doctrine. There is nothing authoritative in early document leading to the belief that anyone outside the individual communities had any voice in the choosing of the local elders or deacons, nor that authority rested elsewhere than in the community as a congregation.

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[19] Galatians I. 1, 11-12.

However, in the intercourse of the separate congregations with one another, there soon arose the need of an individual who should constitute the recognized instrument of communication between them, a sort of *liaison officer,* and there is at least considerable reason to believe that this was the first function of those who came to be known as overseers, *bishops.*[20]

However, as early as the year 100, the early freedom of doctrinal development, which made possible the doctrinal divergencies apparent in the New Testament, began to be embarrassing. Intellectual speculation was so much the habit and pleasure of the Greek world that, entrance once being given to metaphysics, by the emphasis upon Christian knowledge in the Fourth Gospel, this knowledge (gnosis) bred variations of belief which worked against the united force of the body.

The practical problem which confronted the churches in fighting against the growth of sects; in one of its important phases part of the other practical problem of holding their united strength against that of the Roman government, pushed to the fore those individuals who had been chosen to represent the communities in their intercourse with one another, and more and more authority came to rest in their hands. This authority growing, these bishops became, by the middle of the second century, dominant over that of the other chosen officers; and about this time we find, in the letter of Ignatius, written, as we have noted before, on his way to trial, that "so many as are of God and of Jesus Christ, they are with the bishop." Again, in the same letter, we read, "There is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup unto union in his blood; there is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the elders and deacons my fellow servants";[21] and in another letter, "Apart from the bishop it is not lawful either to baptize or to hold an *agape*."[22]

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[20] Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire,* 364.

Shortly after 150 A.D. the Christian communities, clearly considering themselves as *a* Church, and not mere churches, and more and more under the control each of a single head, kept in communication with one another by constantly traveling missionaries and preachers, faced the Roman power as an organized religion. Moreover, such an unusually broad-minded emperor as Hadrian, followed by the mild and peacefully disposed Antoninus Pius, and the philosopher Marcus Aurelius,[23] made it possible for the Christians to undertake an open and reasoned defense of their faith. The Church was fully conscious of its unified organization, more and more broad in envisioning the task before it. Its organization became more and more after the Roman, less and less after the Jewish pattern. In its reasoned apologetic, more and more it utilized and claimed a part also in its Hellenistic inheritance. As a unit it faced, in argument and opposition, the repressive activities of the Roman state, grown, except in cases where local disturbance or national catastrophe aroused public opinion, less bitter and persistent. As a unit it was about to face a long contest for the preservation of the doctrinal basis upon which it had come to rest. Speculation had begun to delve among the roots of the simple faith of precept, the unexplained dogma of its Master's divinity, and such winds of doctrine, if not combated to the death, threatened to break this united front.

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[21] Ignatius, "Letter to the Philadelphians," pars. 3, 4.

[22] *Ibid.,* "To the Smyrnians," par. 8.

[23] The persecution under Marcus Aurelius may have been forced upon him by public opinion, in time of national catastrophe. See Ferrero and Barbagallo, *A Short History of Rome,* II, 321-322.

# BOOK III

# GREEK DOCTRINE—ROMAN POLITY

# XII

BEFORE the second century had passed its second quarter Christianity was a *Church* in theory, and was definitely faced toward Europe in the direction of its doctrinal development and the form of its institutional organization. More, there was perceptible a change in Christian attitude toward that European world to which at the outset Christians had felt themselves opposed completely in principle, and in which they looked upon themselves as aliens. Justin Martyr had gone so far as to speak of philosophy as God's revelation to Greeks, claiming for Plato, Socrates and such Greek philosophers a place similar to that of Moses and the prophets among the Jews.[1] Another intellectual leader of the mid-second century retained, having been converted to Christianity, the philosopher's cloak, that he might present, as a philosopher, the religion to educated Greeks.[2] Other apologists approached the imperial authority, asking to be given legal hearing under existent laws, and to be left unmolested so long as crime was not adjudged against them, seeking with reasoned argument the protection of the state, and to correct the judgment of the civil authorities respecting the ideals of Christianity and the lives and characters of its adherents.

Both in its intellectual and its social attitude Christianity was drawing closer to the world about it. We have immediately before us a period of roughly two centuries, beginning somewhere before 150, at the end of which a Christian Father might hurl indignantly at a pagan the rhetorical question, "Are there then no Hellenes but you?"[3] and Christianity had been given complete toleration, to be almost immediately followed by imperial favor and state protection. Indeed its position at court had become so strong that its plea to the sons of Constantine for the *uprooting* of those who sacrificed to the pagan gods was answered by an edict of one of them making such sacrifice punishable with death.[4] Needless to say such a plea did not quote Jesus as often as the manuals of Christian conduct Christians were reading two and a half centuries earlier.

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[1] Elsee, *Neoplatonism in Relation to Christianity*, 43-44.

[2] The reference is to Aristides.

[3] Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*, I, 130.

As its intellectual task during these two hundred years the Church met heresy, both fighting and feeding upon it. It reached out for more adherents of the educated classes, formulating a philosophy, and founding at Alexandria a school where it was taught. Heresy, philosophy, plus the practical prod of an emperor who did not propose to see his new religion made politically ineffective by internal dissension, succeeded, after considerable difficulty, in defining the principal dogmas which had arisen in a creed which veiled but slightly the struggles out of which it arose.

The union of Christians in an organized society, a Church envisioned during the generations of Paul and of the Apostolic Fathers in spiritual metaphor as a body fed by Jesus Christ, underwent at the same time continual development. The ideal of unity in the Church, descending to a more material realm, similarly to the way in which the Roman Empire had exchanged Jupiter for Commodus in its official religion, began to cast its first glances toward the Bishop of Rome. Cyprian, an African bishop, a typical ecclesiastic of the better, though not the greatest sort, who could not be moved from an attitude of moderation toward penitent sinners, but became indignantly angry at the thought that anyone, Satan himself, should dare to threaten a bishop,[5] contributed, about the middle of the third century, his essay *On the Unity of the Church.* In this treatise Cyprian, though definitely stating that to all of the Apostles, of whom the bishops are said to be the direct successors, equal power was given by Jesus, nevertheless bases the unity of the Church upon the words of Jesus to Peter, reported in the Gospel of Matthew, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I shall build my Church."[6] Cyprian quite definitely does not intend to argue that the Bishop of Rome was in any sense set above the other bishops, addresses the Pope always as *My Brother Cornelius* in letters written to him, states that the episcopate is *one,* every part of which is held by each bishop for the whole;[7] and even more than a century later the great Latin Father Jerome could write, "A bishop, of whatever city he may be bishop, Rome or Guebio, Constantinople or Reggio, Alexandria or Tunis, bears everywhere the same sacred character, the same dignity, the same pontifical office."[8]

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[4] *Ibid.,* 68-69, 83.

[5] Cyprian, "Letter to the Pope Cornelius," No. LIX among his *Letters,* pars. 17-18.

However the unity of the Christian community once having been directly based upon its administrative officers, all unification of organization gave an additional sacred character to the administrators of larger and more important geographical areas. In the early fourth century the bishop of the capitals of the individual Roman provinces had gained authority of a sort over other bishops within the province. It was in the next (fifth) century that Leo I entered upon the clearly planned policy of establishing the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, but when he did so he went back immediately to the passage quoted from Matthew's Gospel by Cyprian, and somewhere between then and the Middle Ages the treatise of the third century African bishop was with slight interpolation made to serve as the earliest direct argument for the primacy of the See of Rome, upon which the whole structure of the Christian Church in Western Europe was for centuries to be based.[9]

The Church was, in short, rapidly making its way in the world during the period we are to consider. It had however been born in a poverty and simplicity in which it had gloried, spurning the world as devoted to other ends than its own, and this development could not proceed without reaction. Some of these reactionaries went off into a wilderness where the climate demanded little in the way of clothing or food, spurning as hermits the worldly consideration the Christians were accumulating. Others got together in groups, developed theological divergencies, and found themselves turned out of the Church as heretics. Salvaging what it could in these two tendencies the Church then wisely organized its own reaction as *monasticism.*

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[6] Matthew XVI. 18-19.

[7] *De Catholice Ecclesiae Unitate,* par. 5. The inevitable tendency of an argument based upon the words of Jesus to Peter was to give particular importance to the Bishop of Rome, once the theory that the bishops were successors of the Apostles was formulated. Cyprian speaks in a letter of Rome as the principal church.

[8] To Evagreus, "On Deacons and Priests," 388.

[9] Leo I, Pope 440-461.

So, in briefest outline, may be summed up the significant development between the middle of the second and the middle of the fourth centuries, into a fuller consideration of which we enter.

It will be suspected, from the outline above, that in the chapters immediately to come we shall seem often to get farther and farther away from the Jesus of Nazareth whom we knew but a few chapters past. Let us then, before losing sight entirely of this figure, turn to a phenomenon not less interesting because it convinces us that, despite all which was working in a contrary direction, the human personality of Jesus was still capable of exercising a persistent influence. This phenomenon the theologians call *docetism.* The primary meaning of the Greek word from which the term is derived is that of *seeming,* applicable to the presumptions of thought or to appearances to the senses.

A god who died and rose again in different form as a savior was comprehensible to the Greeks, and those who had imbibed Greek civilization, as we have seen. It was a beautiful symbol of immortality, made practically efficacious by mystic means of participating in this divine experience. A god who *truly* dies, more particularly who died the shameful death of one condemned by a Roman proconsul was, as Paul knew, "to Greeks foolishness." [10] Indeed, had Paul wished, as we occasionally do, to quote a reference in support of his statement, he might have quoted Plutarch, except that the latter was born a generation later. Plutarch says that when the Greeks saw the Egyptians mourning the death of Osiris they laughed, because if Osiris were really a god he could not have died. Plutarch himself considered this argument so convincing he went on to explain that Osiris probably was not a god, but an active spirit (dæmon) not yet deified.[11]

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[10] I Corinthians I. 23.

The same difficulty arose in the case of Jesus, breeding much *heresy,* which is the name for that side in a theological discussion which loses. Some declared that Jesus only had *appeared* on earth as a man, had only *seemed* to suffer; others that the body of Jesus was a phantom of no real substance, and that another, a real man, had been crucified in his stead; still others that the soul of Jesus, the only divine part, had been in some external sense attached to a body, which body bore the suffering, the soul released before it began; or again that the body was not a real body of flesh and blood, but a marvelously constructed counterfeit, upon which the soul descended as a dove at the moment of the baptism of Jesus, leaving in the same form before the crucifixion.[12]

This form of thought drew away many Christian converts into one or another of the sects which so held, showing of what importance to Christianity was the divinity of Jesus. But that the greater number of Christians should have fought to save the humanity of Jesus seems almost more remarkable. Looking back, in the light of facts which leave the most tangible aid weighable evidence, it seems that they might have considered it of comparatively slight importance at the time to retain a human Jesus, since it was the god Christ who guaranteed salvation. It is of course not impossible to frame theological conceptions in which the humanity of Jesus is essential to the scheme of salvation, but conceptions which left the humanity out were far simpler of formulation. We are almost compelled to think that the Gospels, and other information as to the life and character of the Galilean Prophet, had succeeded in making that personality more deeply and widely precious than we might be led to imagine, with the result that docetism became a heresy, instead of what might have been found a simpler orthodoxy.

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[11] Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris,* sec. 71.

[12] Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity,* II, 16-17.

In a previous chapter we noted paganism, very religious, but with no trusted or organized focus of its hopes, running from one god to another, hoping by *Chance,* the fickle all pervading director of destiny, to be led to the one efficacious deity in a particular moment of exigency.[13] This was in a measure less true of paganism before the close of the third century. Much popular religion found in the Sun a fairly satisfactory object of worship, against whose power a directing force of evil was fighting what was to be in the end a losing battle.[14] In addition to this fairly tangible object of worship, the all-pervading heat of which dulled the candles of lesser religious lights, there had arisen in Alexandria a school of philosophy which gathered together the waifs and strays of philosophic doctrine into a system more orderly and complete than any since the time of Aristotle.

This school of philosophy claimed the inspiration and fatherhood of Plato, and was thence called Neoplatonism. Particularly did it precipitate itself into a troublesome gap in his philosophy.

Plato contributed to philosophy a doctrine of *ideas.* An idea, to us, is a mental figment, of substantiality so slight that a few facts may waft it away to the dusty shelf of some library. Not so for Plato; an idea was an eternal pattern, more *real* than any material happening which convinces our senses of a fact. An idea was a thought of God, a form of His consciousness, almost an aspect of His being. Indeed ideas were so divine that God Himself but imperfectly could represent them in the matter which took form from them.

We are not, however, so much concerned with Plato's ideas as with that gap between them and matter. Into this gap Neoplatonism dropped the tremendous problem of *evil.* Neoplatonism occupied itself with many other problems, often fantastically, but about the problem of evil it was very much in earnest, if not even overzealous. Underneath most of its thought is hidden the question, "If God, in His being essentially good, created the world, how does it happen that there is evil in it?"

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[13] Chap. v, 119f.

[14] The religion referred to is Mithraism.

The problem of evil is a religious problem even before it is a philosophical problem. Taking evil in the broadest sense of everything which goes in a way opposed to the way we should like it to go, despite our best and most intelligent efforts to make it go otherwise, it seems doubtful that, but for evil, anyone ever would have thought of being religious. Life would be but an everlasting wheelchair rolling through flowery fields (if one happened to like that sort of eternal landscape) with no dark ditch of death at the further end. In such a world no God could do anything for anyone more than everyone found done for him each day, or night if this variety seemed desirable.

Religion does not seek to solve the problem of evil. It cries with Job:

> Why give eyes to look on misery,
> Or life to bitter souls
> Who look for death and find it not;
> Dig for it deeper
> Than all the treasures that were ever hid,
> And for joy are beside themselves
> If it come their way?
> To one whom God has hedged
> Till there's left no path for his feet
> Why give the light of day?
> Sighs are my food, more constant
> Than my recurring mealtimes,
> My moanings gush like water-spouts;
> Whatever it is that I fear,
> That it is which cometh upon me,
> What I dread overtakes the steps of my fear;
> Never ease, nor quiet, nor rest,
> Trouble on trouble
> One clutching the heel of another.[15]

Then, also like Job, having threshed the problem bare, to no solution, it casts itself before its God, seeking to be saved.[16]

Had Neoplatonism been interested predominantly, as Plato, in freeing knowledge, and not human souls, from the troubling contamination of material fact, the gap between God and matter would have troubled less. But Neoplatonism was mothered by theosophy, known in this particular period as *Gnosticism.* The simple religious is willing to leave with his God the how and why of his salvation, the theosophist however attains salvation through the discovery of why it is that so many others are damned.

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[15] Job III. 20ff.

[16] *Ibid.,* XLII. 1, 6 "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours may be stayed. . . . I abhore myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Philosophy is reputed to be less personally interested than any type of religion in the solution of its problems, and Neoplatonism, in its master Plotinus, was content to push as far as possible from God responsibility for the evil which appeared to reside in matter. In order so to do God is first removed beyond even the atmosphere of thought, where to speak of Him even as frigid unity or vacuous goodness is to make Him too material. Thence, in triads of immaterial sublimated begettings, descends His potency, through *Mind,* the *World-Soul,* the *Creative-Forces* of nature, toward *Matter.*

Neoplatonism, as has been said, was mothered by the religious movement called Gnosticism. As philosophy it moved in a clearer, rarer intellectual atmosphere than its maternal parent. In its purer form it rejected one and all of the fantastic creation myths of the Gnostic sects, or considered them in a Platonic manner, as symbols only of the creative process by which God, through reason (*Logos*), formed the universe from a material chaos.

As to the problem of evil it was not entirely content to have removed God from all contaminating responsibility for its existence. Here again it rejected Gnostic myth which accounted by bastard births for its intrusion, to base evil not only upon a fundamentally disreputable matter, but upon the ignorance and inertia of human souls in various stages of spiritual purification.

Neoplatonism unified, as has been said, the scattered forces of non-Christian religion. In the first place it did so by finding some place for everything; in the case of religion for every god which any Neoplatonic philosopher had heard of as having been worshiped anywhere.[17] Jehovah might be thought of as the Creative-

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[17] The theosophical writings of Plutarch, better known for his *Lives,* are an outstanding relic of this type of thought.

Force of nature, the Stoics deity went a stage higher as the World-Soul. One no longer went from altar to altar as Chance directed, but might do so in an ascending pilgrimage, it always being understood to those of higher enlightenment that ultimately there was but a single God. Inspired by this philosophy paganism took a new lease upon life, and turned back with a new spirit, and under the leadership of philosophers, to the old Hellenic altars and temples. It was under this inspiration that, under the Emperor Julian, Paganism fought its last battle with Christianity.

With the exception of its internal doctrinal struggles, Christianity fought its intellectual battles during this period with Gnosticism and Neoplatonism. But it was also influenced in no small degree by its antagonists. Ammonius Saccas began to teach Neoplatonism in Alexandria at the beginning of the third century. By the middle of that century the Christians had their school in the same city. It might have been called a university. No longer might a Christian say, as Paul had done, "Not many wise, or powerful, or well-born, but the dull-witted God chose, in order that he might put to shame the wise." [18] Students who showed themselves able were taught geometry, physiology and astronomy; then philosophy, by the expounding of the poetical and philosophical classics of the pagan world; all of which lead ultimately to the study of theology.[19] As a result the Christians soon had accomplished philosophers of their own. A richly developed mind of originality and imaginative vigor is however always a trial to those who have in charge the preservation of ecclesiastical regularity. The most brilliant and scholarly graduate of this school was disciplined for daring to teach theology before he was in clerical orders. This fertile thinker (Origen) possessed of an eager mind, great intellectual energy and industry, and an imagination too fanciful for ecclesiastical safety, became the founder of systematic Christian theology, and the great father of the movement to accommodate Christian philosophy and science to the thought of the Greek world of his time and the centuries immediately following. He was however more than once in difficulties during his lifetime because of suspected theories, and in the sixth century, to be sure not without considerable wire-pulling, and the assistance of a meddling emperor (Justinian) the Church officially disowned him as heretic.

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[18] I Corinthians I. 26-27.
[19] Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria,* 70-72.

It is true that the work of Origen tended to strip the historical personality of Jesus of all significance for the religion, but on the other hand he helped first and considerably to round out the Christian Trinity by increasing the importance of the Holy Spirit. All the world, he wrote, believed in God, and many pagans had seen that the material creation had been the work of the *Word,* become the second person of the Trinity. Christians alone came to know of the existence of the Holy Spirit, of whom, as well as of the Father and the Son, mankind must know to be regenerated.

Gnosticism, of date earlier than Neoplatonism and against the superstitious materializations of which this school of philosophy was in a large measure directed, represented the extreme of the speculative religious tendencies in a world where Christianity seems to have rendered dynamic many currents of religious belief and practice. For the most part Gnosticism claimed to be Christian. Christianity rejected the movement, not however without adapting itself to much of the impetus which inspired it.

The dominant impulse behind the various Gnostic sects was the search for salvation through (1) knowledge (*gnosis*) and (2) by escape from the sinful contamination of matter. The reaction against this movement left Christianity with a philosophy, of which something has been said. It left it also with *asceticism,* to which we shall return, the latter as a means of reducing to the smallest possible proportions the body's essential sinfulness.

But Gnosticism had other characteristics which, already inherent in paganism, left still clearer marks upon Christian thought and practice.

The Gnostic sects were, like the mysteries, secret organizations. They had generally grades of membership to which in succession, with the successive imparting of increasing secret knowledge, the devotees were initiated. Christianity felt bound to impart its gospel freely, and to allow, if not encourage, the reading of the accepted Scriptures.[20] It contented itself with licensing, by a sacred ordination, those who were allowed to teach the doctrine which was growing up as the official and orthodox interpretation of these writings. However Paul had written to the Corinthians, "I could not speak to you as spiritual, but as carnal; babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for you were not able to digest it." Candidates for baptism were divided into two classes during the stage of their *catechumanate,* during which they were supposed to learn their essential beliefs and duties as baptized Christians. The baptized formed a third class of larger privilege, and the clergy (to which time was to add a still more illuminated fifth class, the monks and nuns,) formed a fourth. Though the principle of restricted knowledge was never admitted, the different classes came to have more and more definite prerogatives, and a progressive odor of sanctity.

All of the Gnostic sects had mystical ceremonies, presence at which was confined to the initiate. So the most spiritually important Christian ceremonies came to be closed to the eyes of the profane, and baptism and the eucharist, or communion, became *mysteries.*

Baptism—inherited from John the Baptizer as a bath of purification for repentant sinners, which Paul as a teacher felt so little to be part of his task that he says, "I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Chrispus and Gaius . . . for Christ did not send me to baptize but to evangelize" [21]—became an *initiation* of considerable complication, preceded by preparatory steps, which came to number seven. In the first the baptismal name was given, exorcism of evil spirits followed, at the third the Scriptures were opened to the initiate, the Symbol of Faith (from which grew the Creeds) and the Lord's Prayer were communicated, as in the mysteries, verbally. A final and more elaborate exorcism by priests, and not by clerics of a lower order immediately preceded baptism, which was not considered complete until after confirmation and the first participation in the holy communion.

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[20] Harnack speaks of the fact that Christians were not at this time forbidden to read the Bible for themselves as "one of the most astounding facts in the internal history of the Church" (*Bible Reading in the Early Church,* chap. ii).

[21] I Corinthians I. 14-17.

The Gnostic sects had their officiating priests of various grades, through whom mysteries of ritual and knowledge were administered or communicated. Likewise the elders and officers among the Christians took on a sacrosanct character as stewards and dispensers of mysteries, which mysteries were not merely good-tidings (evangelia) that heralded the coming of the kingdom of God, as Jesus had taught; not that immanent assurance of salvation which filled and energized Paul; nor a rule of conduct fitting the Christian to participate in the expected eternal life; not even a substantial faith, whether revealed mystically in Christ or more concretely delivered once for all to some chosen holy persons, the apostles and inspired writers of the sacred books. There were now mysteries of ritual, salvation to be communicated in symbolical sacramental acts. The hands as well as the lips and hearts of the appointed officers of the Church were from henceforth to be anointed, that by them these mysteries of ritual, in baptism, confirmation, communion and ordination, might, in the touch of sacred fingers, communicate the divine. Sacraments grew in number until finally limited by the mystical quality believed to inhere in the number *seven.*

Gnosticism had also a rich effulgence of subsidiary deities through whom the one God, enthroned too far above the material universe to operate directly within it or upon it, might exercise His creative power. The old Testament had a few angels. Two of them guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were expelled, one as a pillar of fire and cloud accompanied the Children of Israel on their flight from Egypt. They were messengers, or emissaries, whom Jehovah sent forth from time to time, more usually to communicate some word of admonition or warning. They became for later Jewish thought, much as the subsidiary gods of the Gnostics, *causes, powers, operative forces, subordinated administratives;* of which it was difficult to say whether or not they were *persons,* this difficulty being avoided by alluding to them as *names.*[22] Christianity, during this period, having not yet discovered the cult of the *saints,* turned, for their subsidiary dispensers of God's power and providence, to these angels who, as *orders* and *offices* under God and the creating Christ, were certainly, as Origen believes, persons.[23]

In short, the kingdom of God, for Christians, remained no longer the simpler affair prepared for by John the Baptizer in preaching repentance, the joyous news of which Jesus began to spread abroad when first he came as a preacher to Capernaum. On its intellectual side it had expanded to accept, with its own interpretation to be sure, substantially all that content of the world which the Greek mind had explored, and a peopling of heaven only a little less complicated than that expounded by the uniting of Greek, Jewish and other Asiatic thought.

In this way the Church was intellectually prepared to serve its own age and environment in a very broad way. Perhaps two things only saved it from so transforming itself as the servant of its own age that it must have died with the fall of the system upon which that age rested. These two circumstances we have already mentioned; the firm stand of the Church to preserve the humanity of Jesus, in refusing to accept any form of docetism, and the fact that it neither destroyed, in any substantial sense rewrote, nor even attempted to close to the worshipers generally its documentary basis, become sacred for it, the Bible.

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[22] Paul, in a sense negativing their significance, yet by no means denying it, so refers to them, stating that Christ was above them, and every *name* which could be *named.* In early thought a name is often a mystic sort of thing, in which some individual vital power is inherent. When Adam names the animals he gives them, in doing so, their principle of existence, their vital individuality.

[23] *Concerning Fundamental Principles* (*De Principiis*), I, v, 2-3.

# XIII

Much of the strength of Christianity has always come from the fact that its early history is one of idealistic heroism, a gentle, passive, but none the less determined and clearly enunciated defiance to the compromises with evil which perhaps alone make any broad social organization possible, whether political or religious. Jesus found indeed that his gospel, despite his intention to spread it broadcast, was widely acceptable only so far as he allowed it to be interpreted in the form of popular expectations against which he set himself, even at the peril of death. He then conceived it as a grain of mustard seed, planted in a restricted soil, capable of flourishing in but a few souls at the outset, but to grow with time into a great bush.

The opposition of Judaism, followed by that of the pagan populace, and finally that of the Roman administrative system, determined the tradition that the way of Christians was a narrow way, its further entrance to eternal life contracted. When the death of Jesus had been theologically interpreted as a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of others, an *atonement* of some sort, little remained to keep alive the memory that Jesus had really suffered not because his gospel was not generally acceptable, but for the reënforcement of later sufferings of his followers because of what they held to be the truth.

In the movement sketched in the preceding chapter, Christianity set out to meet general religious expectations, accommodating its truth, not of course without discrimination, to them. Fewer and fewer individual Christians were called upon to suffer even such lesser evils as intellectual contempt or social inconvenience on account of their faith. The historical aspect, even of Jesus' suffering was obscured. In art Jesus appeared in the garb of an orator. The cross, about which New Testament writers had so much to say, appears in Christian art of this period, but not the cross upon which convicts were put to death. It is transformed, its ignominy is veiled. Only rarely does it appear naked, as an instrument of punishment, and then without the figure of Jesus hanging upon it.[1]

In short, the Christian way was being broadened out, and its roughness was being smoothed, that more might pass over it.

One difficulty remained. Pagans too were preoccupied with it in purificatory ceremony and in speculation. This problem has been stated: the problem of evil; whence it came, and what was to be done about it.

Everyone admitted that evil was somehow bound up with men's bodies. If one could not wash off its stain in some bath of purification, one must either prepare by mystic initiation to be rid of its curse after death, or (more strenuous exercise) one must mortify the flesh while still alive in it.

This later exercise is called asceticism, meaning primarily, discipline. In this day, when we are so conscious of the morbid pathological traits of asceticism, it is perhaps only fair to say that some healthy vigorous persons have used it as such, at least for a period of their lives, rejecting it as of any further healthy use. Asceticism is, however, more usually a mixture of four factors; discipline, mortification, the inducement of a thinness of consciousness which encourages contemplative vision (even hallucinatory trance), and morbid sensual satisfaction in the pain inflicted.

Asceticism at its worst is so pathological that those who so practice it would doubtless be among the sick-minded under any conditions. Asceticism at its most vigorous is so strenuous that, whether or not there be any other good thing to say about it, it is too radical in its method ever to be popular without some strong external pressure of environment or idea.

Asceticism was not anywhere taught by Jesus as a means of attaining to the kingdom of heaven. It was contrary to the gospel of Paul, who felt himself freed by his conversion, with all his faculties liberated and energized. Indeed his popular influence, when exaggerated, was always tending in the opposite direction, toward a feeling that what the body did was a matter of indifference if the soul had been saved. This tendency he was called upon more than once to rebuke. The early Christian opposition to and withdrawal from the world was, not a direct means of attaining holiness, but an expression of their repugnance to the ideals of the pagan world.

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[1] Brehier, *L'Art Chrétien,* 32-34.

The asceticism which began to be popular in the third century was based upon a different principle; not an appraisal of the life of the pagan world so much as an appraisal of the lives of the average Christian. We are told at the beginning of the earliest history of the movement that it arose because some Christians wished "to live wholly heavenly lives, and to travel on the road which leadeth unto the kingdom of heaven."[2] It was no longer enough to embrace Christianity; to be assuredly upon the heavenly road one must do something more. The early Christian withdrew a part of his life from the pagan world. The early Christian ascetic withdrew his life from the community of ordinary Christians, by taking up a solitary abode, first on the outskirts of some city or village, later in wildernesses and deserts more and more removed from the centers of civilization. The early Christians, if called upon for heroic conduct, might be asked to face lions in the arena, or livid flames about to lap their extremities. These ascetics devised a more constantly exacting struggle with normal organic satisfaction, with lust and with hunger.

The most popularly known of these early Christian ascetics is the hermit Anthony, born about 251. It is this St. Anthony whose temptations have been more than once lusciously imagined by literary artists, and described for persons who take their asceticism discriminatingly and vicariously. The modern biographer marks immediately his neurotic streak, in the first biography written of him.

> When he was a child he knew nothing of his father, or of what went on among his own kinsfolk. He was so silent in disposition, and his mind

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[2] *The Paradise of Palladius* (written about 420), introductory epistle.

> was so humble, that he did not even trouble his parents by asking them questions. . . . He was unable to read or write, because he could not bear the rough behaviour of the boys in the school. . . . He was not like an ordinary child, the course of whose attendance (in church) is broken by the amusements of childhood.[3]

We are told that in the early days of Anthony the monks had not yet explored the inner desert, and that this hermit, born in Egypt, removed only to a mountain near his home, having sold all of his possessions and given the money to the poor. From here he went visiting other hermits to learn all he could about the ascetic life, and we are told that when he met other young ascetics he was envious of them in respect to nothing except in his desire that they should not outdo him in their austerities.

Indeed, except for the unhealthy pleasure which a body may come to take in its pain, there was little human satisfaction which the zealous ascetic could enjoy beyond that of surpassing his fellows in the sternness with which he treated his body. Countless grotesqueries, morbidities, inhumanities became conspicuous in this struggle.

One particularly strenuous athlete of asceticism was vexed at a mosquito which stung him and crushed it with his hand. Despising himself for having so revenged a pain inflicted upon his body he chose a place in the desert where there were mosquitos which resembled wasps and so savage that they could pierce the skin of pigs. There he remained naked for six months, returning so eaten and swollen that one would have thought he had the hide of an elephant, and when he returned to his cell those who had known him before could recognize him in no other way than by his voice.[4]

Danger to purity lurked even in the natural affections. We are told of two brothers, both ascetics, one of whom was at the point of death, and entreated the other to visit him, "even if only at night," when darkness, making it impossible to see him, would at least lessen the sensual satisfaction of the visit. But the entreated brother replied that he could not do even this, since should he, his heart would not remain pure, and fixed upon God only. "So the brother died," the tale concludes, "and they did not see each other." [5]

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[3] *Life of Saint Anthony,* attributed to Athanasius.

[4] *Paradise* of Palladius; *History of Macarius the Alexandrian, the Glorious.*

Not least strange among these ascetics were the *stylites,* who took to living upon the top of pillars. Among these the one who seems to have inaugurated the movement, and whose fame spread farthest, was one Simeon, who had already tried as a hermitage, before mounting his first pillar, life in the bottom of a dry well. With considerable difficulty he was persuaded to desert this hermitage at the end of five days. His first pillar experiment was modest, an abode lifted but some six feet above his fellows, but he was discontented with this, and choosing pillars higher and higher, he finally passed his declining years upon one six or more times as high.[6] "Everyone assures me," a visitor shouted up to him, "that you neither eat nor sleep. Are you a man or an angel?" Simeon had a ladder brought, that the curious admirer might assure himself by climbing, contemplating the running sore upon his foot, and touching his flesh, that he was really a man. The doubt was however flattering, as were the crowds which gathered. People flocked from every side: Arabs, Persians, Armenians, even Spaniards, Gauls, and Britons. An image of him was displayed at Rome. At his funeral more than half a dozen bishops assembled, and several hundred soldiers, as a guard of honor for his corpse.[7]

His immediate successor in this sort of asceticism was ordained a priest upon the top of his pillar, the necessary officiants mounting beside him, since he might not descend.[8] Then, a generation later, another Simeon became a stylite at the age of seven, having not yet lost all of his baby teeth.[9] As late as the thirteenth century, two stylites perched upon two pillars in Constantinople, where in older days had been statues of two Roman emperors.[10]

There were also, as a modification of this type of ascetics, those who perched in trees instead of upon the top of pillars, outdoing in the length of time they rested there all twentieth-century records in human tree perching. Sometimes they chose fruit trees, which had advantages no pillar possessed.[11]

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[5] *Sayings of the Holy Fathers,* ii, 395.

[6] Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites* (Bollandiste), xxvii.

[7] *Ibid.,* xxix.

[8] *Ibid.,* xlviii.

[9] *Ibid.,* lxv.

[10] *Ibid.,* cxxxiii.

"How difficult it is to penetrate into a world so closed and so far distant from our own," remarks the learned Jesuit editor of several of these lives of stylites which have come down to us. "It would be too easy and without doubt unjust to attribute to egotism, self-interest, and pride," [12] all the zeal that entered in; and the other part escapes for the large part even our imagining. It was certainly an effective way of assuring the fact that one's light of sanctity should not be hidden underneath a bushel basket. And the influence was appreciated, since some of them were called upon to give advice in important theological disputes of their period, and all of them were centers of admiring crowds.

These hermits, gathering in larger and larger numbers in the Egyptian Thebaid until they came to live so close together that something of a community life began to develop, were Christianity's first experiment with asceticism. Out of them grew organized monasticism, about to play such a large part in the history of this religion in Europe. The unorganized asceticism of this period, ignorance of the pitfalls of such abnormal human existence, bred extravagances which the later monastic rules aimed to hold in check. The wholesomeness of physical labor for those whose corporeal activities were not supposed to add any element of essential interest to their lives was one lesson which was learned. To sleep one hour of the twenty-four, and to spend the other twenty-three in solitary contemplation of one's sinfulness was soon discovered to be dangerous to sanity, as was also too conspicuous austerity. We read of one ascetic who became so enamored of his ability to surpass the others in rigorous fasting that he sent back with scorn the meager portion of food sent him. Instead of listening to those who tried to reason with him he sent them away scornfully, and began to have visions of Christ, who appeared to approve him for his holy life. Following these he refused the holy communion, saying that he had no need of it since the Lord Himself had appeared to him. As a next step his fellow ascetics were forced to bind him as clearly insane. Only a whole year of normal living was able to restore him to sanity.[13]

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[11] *Ibid.,* clxxiv.

[12] *Ibid.,* cxciii.

Another aspect of this movement, in which were combined the desire to mortify the flesh, and a reaction against Christianity become too respectable and too comfortable, was the exaltation of virginity and chastity.

The story of the virgin birth of Jesus, which came so late into the Church that it affected the New Testament only in the infancy narratives of the First and the Third Gospels, appears there, certainly in the case of the First Gospel (Matthew) not to emphasize the holiness of the mother of Jesus, but rather to attest the divinity of Jesus, by giving him a marvelous birth.[14] Indeed any conception of virginity as setting women upon a higher plane of spirituality was foreign to the spirit of Judaism, marriage and parenthood being for the Jew a woman's crown of glory and a man's religious duty.[15]

However, the idea that there was something sacred or magical about virginity was by no means strange to European religious ideas. Mother-goddesses, female fertility divinities, appear to have been usually conceived as virgins. The reason for this is by no means clear, but it seems probable that it arose from a belief that something of the mystic life-force was lost, dissipated, in the sexual act, and therefore the virgin goddess conserved more of it.[16] She was a closed vessel, a sealed depository of fertility energy. With this cycle of ideas sexual ethics had nothing to do. However the mythology and the ritual of religions may keep alive an odor of sanctity when the theory upon which it is based has been long forgotten. Pagans still paid devotions to virgin goddesses, and such an institution as the Vestal Virgins at Rome lived on. A social condition plus a philosophical idea was at work reinterpreting this virginal sanctity, not in Christianity alone but in other cycles of religious-philosophical thought, during all the early centuries of the Christian religion.

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[13] This story of the Palestinian ascetic, Valens, is taken from the Greek version of Palladius. Other quotations from, and references to this work are from the translation of Wallis Budge from a Syriac manuscript. The author owes the story of Valens to Neander, *History of the Christian Religion and Church,* II, 239 (Eng. trans.).

[14] Matthew I. 25 states that Joseph "knew not his wife" until after the birth of Jesus.

[15] This is so spread through the Old Testament that particular references are too many to be noted here. Fertile marriages are still the glory of pious Jews.

[16] Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* attributes virgin mother-goddesses to the fact that in primitive society the circumstances of fatherhood are unknown. This however appears to account for nothing. The interpretation here given takes account of the fact that enforced chastity, on the part of men, during a certain period preceding a hunting or marauding expedition, is common. The idea seems to be that they must accumulate vital-magic-force to be expended in their expedition.

The social condition was sexual licentiousness, which apparently increased continually in the centers of European civilization during these centuries. The philosophical idea was, of course, the conception that the body was essentially evil, and that therefore its pleasurable functioning must be checked or killed.

Sexual licentiousness is an orchid, an adorned parasite of civilization. The social and material atmosphere surrounding primitive or simple communities largely takes care of the questions, both of preserving whatever sexual regularity custom sanctions and furthering moderation and restraint. European civilization in the centers of population, far removed from such simplicity in the period before us, felt more and more the need of an ethical ideal to check conditions of sexual laxity which were debasing, debilitating and abominating society. The institution of slavery provided what was practically legalized concubinage, not considered intolerable until connections between highborn women and slaves became enough to move the law to step in. But even here the law was relatively helpless. It might, and did prescribe punishment for such liaisons between such a free woman and the slave of another, but between her and her own slave it could not set itself.

To check this licentiousness the higher forms of religious thought, pagan and Christian alike, seized upon the ideal of perpetual chastity which, being too radically unnatural to be universally acceptable, became a distinguishing mark of particular purity or holiness.

Christians could not condemn marriage. Jesus had sanctified the marriage feast of Cana with a miracle, Paul had *allowed* it, Peter had been married. Tertullian, in a treatise exhorting to virginity, set down as his first sentence, "Heretics do away with marriage."[17] Indeed, had not the condemnation of marriage been plainly heretical upon good New Testament evidence, the accumulation of married converts, some of whom were to become priests, even bishops, the Church might have been deeply troubled.

But virginity was plainly the rôle of the perfect. In accommodation to the practical situation in which the Church found itself virginity might be divided into three species. Of these the first, virginity from birth, was the happiest, for it meant total ignorance of that from which one would wish afterwards to be freed. But Christians might, if unhappily married at the time of conversion, become virgins from baptism, their *second birth,* or, their marriage dissolved by the death of their partner in it, they might become virgins in bowing to the will of God which had without their choice absolved them from the married state.[18]

For the females of the third class the Church from its early beginnings had provided the ecclesiastical rôle of *widows,* with functions which made of them at one time *presbytresses,* the feminine of the early priestly title. But, as virginity came to be more and more esteemed, they were forced to give way before the purer class of virgins from birth, these no longer of the rank of presbyter, but reduced to that of *deacon* (deaconesses).

There were, however, ways of using the marriage state which might be particularly commended. Jerome writes in commendation of a woman who had chosen to marry and bear children, not as submitting herself to God's commandment to Adam and Eve, that they increase the population of the earth, but in order that she might present her children as virgins to Jesus Christ.[19]

But perhaps the most extraordinary phenomena resulting from this ideal were the *spiritual* or virginal marriages, in which husband and wife lived together years in vowed chastity. One of these stories will serve as an example of many. It is told of Abba Ammon, called the Father of Egyptian monasticism.

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[17] "On Monogamy."

[18] Tertullian, "On Exhortation to Chastity."

[19] Jerome, "Letter to the Senator Pammacus."

Left an orphan at twenty-two his older brother wished him to marry, to which he finally consented. Being at last alone with his bride he called her to him and said, "Hereafter you will be my lady and my sister, and I will tell you of something better than marriage. . . . Let us guard the glory of our virginity unspotted, that we may take our rest at the marriage feast which is incorruptible." Then he read to her passages from the Scriptures and persuaded her. She did not, however, wish to follow his suggestion that they live separately, so they vowed virginity and took up their abode in a single house, for eighteen years. All day he worked in his garden, she in the house. In the middle of the night they rose for a prayer, at dawn he departed to his garden. So they "removed themselves from passions and attained unto impassability." Having reached this point the wife concluded that her husband should have a broader sphere of activity. At her suggestion he expressed approval of her beautiful spirit, that led her to make this sacrifice, and departed to the Nitrian Desert, built there a house in which he lived for another twenty-two years, seeing his wife twice a year.[20]

In passing it may be remarked that Christianity, as always when it has emphasized some heroically radical ideal, gathered in a considerable number of conspicuous sinners. To receive such it had been prepared by the example of Jesus, who had often found his gospel easier of access to the conspicuous sinner than to him who accounted himself sufficiently righteous to be contented if not indeed to feel a little superior to his neighbors.

Accounts of ascetic piety in this period abound in tales of converted harlots and men with misspent youths behind them. The most widely known among such is perhaps the Blessed Thaïs, brilliant and beautiful courtesan of Alexandria, the rumor of whose beauty traveled far and wide until "those living far off desired greatly to see her—and many, by reason of their mad love for her, sold whatever property they had," in order to possess her for a little season or a single night. The tales delight in recounting her brilliant life, while the rich and the powerful loaded her with attentions, until, by the conversion of Bessarion, she was led to burn all her jewels and finery, and follow him to the desert to become a sainted ascetic.[21]

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[20] *Paradise* of Palladius, chap. viii.

The ideal of chastity entered, needless to reiterate, into the prescription for the ascetic life, first of independent hermits, as it was to do into the rules of the organized monastic life. Also, very early, as Christianity developed a priesthood, ordained with ceremony and sanctified, an attempt was made to enforce celibacy upon this priesthood, at least in the higher grades (305). At the Council of Nicea the attempt was repeated, with the result that the Council preferred not to touch this troublesome matter, except to rule that no cleric should have living with him any woman, save it were his mother, sister or aunt.[22] This left the situation as it was before, rule and custom differing between East and West, and doubtless even between different episcopal jurisdictions.[23] Naturally celibacy was not, by this time, uncommonly practiced even by nonmonastic clergy, nor the custom of married clergy, particularly bishops, to separate from their wives after ordination to the higher grades.

Enforced celibacy of the clergy does not belong to this period. A decree of 384 commanded it for the Western Church, but as we will see the question was still to be unsettled for centuries.[24]

The Church early expressed disapproval of second marriages, even for the laity, prohibiting them for clerics. The nice question might rise, however, as to whether marriages contracted, and dissolved by death, before baptism, counted against a cleric, disqualifying him from clerical office as one twice married.[25]

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[21] *Ibid.,* chap. xxx. Anatole France has retold the tale with considerable learning and, needless to say, has touched it with his irony.

[22] "Canon III" of Nicene Council.

[23] See Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles* (or in German original or English trans.), ii, sec. 43.

[24] Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy,* I, 43-54.

[25] See letter of Jerome (in the year 399) "To Oceanus."

In these early days the psychology of the phenomena of asceticism and celibacy was little exploited, and we for our part may well leave its complicated mental atmosphere for further consideration at a later and more self-conscious period, when austere and visionary mystics came to recount in considerable detail, often with unhealthy gusto, their extraordinary experiences.

# XIV

THE germ of a religion of creed, the small seed from which might grow the conviction that the proper sort of belief about Jesus, and consequently as things developed, about God, had a *saving power,* was planted within the New Testament period, as has been said in an earlier chapter.

A creed is a formal verbal expression of faith. In the Latin the word retains the direct verbal form, *credo,* which means *I believe.*

Faith is essential to the religious attitude, because religion has to do, not with something already accomplished, but with something that the person who practices religion hopes to see accomplished. Faith is defined in the New Testament, using two Greek words of long philosophical history; as the *subsistent reality* of things hoped for, the *proof* of things unseen.[1] Faith, in this sense, is a presumption, a forerunner of another sort of conviction that the object of faith exists. Faith so described, is a conviction that my dream castle in Spain will one day rise substantial upon the suburban lot I am about to purchase.

It is this sort of faith which is behind religion everywhere. We quoted from Virgil the lines of religious injunction: "And three times around the new crops let pass the fructifying sacrifice." Such an injunction implies a faith that, if the sacrificial victim is drawn around the planted field the crops will be better. So too the initiate to the mysteries believed that a happy after-life awaited him, existed *in presumption* from the moment of his initiation.

A creed, in the sense that creeds arose in Christianity, was something added to, and unessential to, such a faith. For it is not the same thing to say, "I believe that the tree in the back corner of my garden will bear fruit next autumn which will be pleasant to eat," and to say, "I believe that the fruit to grow upon that tree will have this or that definite chemical constituency." Indeed many more people would cultivate a garden upon the basis of the first hope than upon the second. I can imagine myself saying to my scientific friend who voiced the latter conviction, "I believe you are right, because it is your business to know more than I about such matters, but I don't propose to water my tree all summer just to prove that you are."

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[1] Hebrews XI. 1. The Greek words are *upostasis,* meaning primarily *that which stand under* a thing, hence the foundation of its reality; and *elegkos,* the technical term in Greek philosophy for proof.

But the faith which is essential to religious practice, whether ethical or magical, is just the sort which leads one to water a garden all the hot evenings from a conviction that as a result he will eat pleasanter fruit next autumn. We are set out upon a journey of creedal adventure, for indeed the attempt to define the sort of belief which guaranteed salvation to the Christian who held it was a life and death struggle, in which men rose and fell for the difference between two single letters and were ready to cut one another's throats for a phrase the subtleties of which I shall not ask you to comprehend. It is easy to make merry over controversy which has come to appear pointless, but it is safer to assume that intelligent men had an intelligent reason for being so serious about subtle differences of opinion; and the first step in understanding such persons is to comprehend their presuppositions on the one hand, and on the other to look beyond to see just how much or little these presuppositions were as essential as they evidently believed them to be.

A creed then, let us say, is no essential part of the faith which is behind all religious activity. A creed, in the sense of Christian history, is an attempt to define the essential objects which religion in its faith assumes to be real, in anticipation of the enjoyment of a more present and lively conviction to come. The attempt to formulate a creed is natural enough when people begin to speculate as to the precise nature of the objects of their faith. But a creed is only important, to the extent of life and death struggle, where it is believed that one who has not correctly analyzed the apple of his religious expectations cannot hope to enjoy its flavor in some autumn of achieved salvation.

Christianity, almost from the outset, became involved in an unessential, additional element of faith, in a sense extraneously introduced. The situation in which Jewish followers of Jesus found themselves made the acceptance of hopes aroused in them by him appear to be dependent upon the belief that he was the fulfillment of those messianic hopes already discussed. So, whatever may have been the real ground of confidence in his gospel or his personality, they felt able to validate their faith only in ascribing to him a preconceived dignity, which might have expressed itself in the proposition of creedal form, "I believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the expected Messiah."

So, imperceptibly almost, there crept into the minds of Christians a confusion with regard to faith. This confusion may be made clear by putting two speeches of Peter into creedal form. One of these speeches comes at the place where Jesus asked his disciples if they were about to leave him as having lost faith in him. Peter here enunciates a creed: "I believe that with you are words of eternal life." [2] The other occasion is upon the road to Cæsarea Philippi. Jesus asks his disciples, first, whom people generally took him to be, and then whom they themselves took him to be. Again in creedal form what Peter says is, "I believe that you are the Messiah." [3]

An inhabitant of the European world in the First Century might have echoed the words of Peter's first creed, but no one but a Jew could have enunciated the second. Nevertheless the conception of the Messiah was one of so many different forms, and so vague in ultimate definition, that it found little difficulty in changing gradually into something else. Christians hardly knew when and where along the road the belief in Jesus as the expected Messiah ceased to be important. They had long believed it important that he be accepted *as* the Messiah, they continued to believe it was important that he be accepted as the Son of God. It is scarcely to be doubted that before the New Testament period

[2] John VI. 68.

[3] Matthew XVI. 16, Mark VIII. 29, Luke IX. 20.

closed Christians were taught, precedent to initiation (baptism) certain elementary propositions of faith; including not only the belief that Jesus was the Son of God, but the necessity of repentance, faith in God, in the cleansing efficacy of baptism, the spiritual gifts imparted by the apostolic *laying on of hands* (later called confirmation), the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment.[4] These articles of faith were considered as oracles, or revelations (*logoi*) and were imparted by word of mouth as secrets of the faith, but there was naturally no fixed universal form of stating the propositions, that doubtless depending upon the teacher who imparted them, until gradually certain forms came to be standardized in particular communities, later in broader geographical areas.

It is doubtful that Jesus ever said *believe in me;* rather *follow me,* and *believe in the Gospel.* He implies that lack of faith in him will express itself in action; the doubting will *go away.*[5] Propositions about faith in God, the doctrine of baptism, etc., as mentioned above were taken to be summaries of that gospel. After reciting them the author of Hebrews says, not this ye shall *believe,* but this ye shall *do.*[6] But, before the New Testament period had closed confusion arose, and Christians might argue, not as to the comparative value of *dead* works of the Hebrew Law and *living* works of the Gospel, but as to whether *faith* or *works* was the essential to salvation,[7] works being now substantially the reaction of faith in all religious actions generally, all the sacrificing, the dancing, jumping and praying of the history of religion, and faith being a saving attempt to think the right sort of things *about* the nature of your God, your Savior, or your salvation, which at certain periods, one of which we are now considering, has played a large rôle in Christian history.

The beginnings of the history of official creeds is hard to trace, because there are no early documents. It was probably due in part to the influence of the mystery religions, in part at the begin-ing to persecution, that even after councils began to dispute about the wording of creeds there was a hesitation about making them public,[8] and earlier they were not written down even for the faithful, but transmitted by word of mouth and learned by heart by the aspirants for baptism. It seems certain however that there was no uniformity of doctrinal statement, and no clear idea as to the exact function of such formulations. The Christians thought of their religion as one, not of the letter, but of the spirit, in contradistinction to that of the Jews. The Christian law was written in the hearts of men, not upon tables of stone.[9]

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[4] Hebrews VI. 1-2.

[5] John VI. 67 (see also Matthew XIX. 22, XXII. 22).

[6] Hebrews VI. 3.

[7] General Epistle of James.

But here, as in so many places, the growing Church kept its inconsistencies in solution, and complicated its position. They were slow to admit a creedal formulation as a *rule* of faith reduced to written words, since pages of the New Testament had been written to expound the fact that such rules were stagnation to spiritual life. So such formulations even as came to have authority were referred to as *symbols.* Tertullian refers to them as *tokens,* a sort of password by which Christians in different parts of the world might recognize and accept the fellowship of one another.[10] It was not expected that the same formula should be common everywhere, the substance, not the precise wording, being important. They were summaries of what were taken to be the essential truths as found in the New Testament, and the apparent variety of symbols evidence the fact that it was to this Gospel, rather than to any doctrinal formulation, that the baptized person subscribed, in answer to the question, *Do you believe?* It was this Gospel, later the Church, through which salvation came, not through subscription to the properly worded creed.

In the meeting of various heresies such summaries tended to become by accretion safeguards against false doctrine, adding first of all, it would appear, statements to emphasize against Docetism the reality of the human birth, life and death of Jesus to a more primitive formula of belief in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life.[11] So the baptismal symbol or summary developed into a complicated creed, set out upon the road which found its goal only in post-Reformation times, of becoming in theory the *Constitution of the true Church.*

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[8] Sozomen, *Church History,* I, xx.

[9] Jerome and Augustine, though writing in an age of discussion about creeds, do not altogether forget this. See passages quoted by Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom,* I, note at bottom page 18.

[10] Tertullian, "On Prescription against Heretics," 36.

Thus no creed ever became in Catholicism, since the Catholic Church, in theory, always held itself to be the definer of creeds, not defined by any. It did become, however, something so near to this that for practical purposes the difference often seems nil, a *rule of faith,* subsription to which was enjoined upon all its members. The way to this was smoothed by the fact that a simple summary of the faith, broad enough to have admitted practically all the important heresies, was imparted to the aspirant for baptism at a particularly solemn moment of the baptismal ceremony, and became a part of his baptismal vow of allegiance. The scattered evidence leads to the belief that the baptismal symbol long resisted accretion, but the inevitable logic of an institution aiming at unified power, fearful of heresy, forcing it into schism, persecuting it, fastened creedal subscription so firmly upon the constitution of the Church that the Reformation rather intensified than otherwise its fundamental importance.

Thus Christianity, unaware of the difficulties in which it was thereby to become involved, yet not completely unconscious of its inconsistency in doing so, allowed subscription to a verbal creed to enter as a prerequisite to the salvation which it had undertaken to offer to the world in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

If this Jesus truly offered men salvation, and if this salvation involved as an essential the assent to the right propositions setting forth the nature of his personality, with that of his Father, and the Holy Spirit of which he had discoursed; if it involved the assent to the right sort of propositions about the community of Christians, the nature of forgiveness, and of eternal life, it was indeed an important matter to arrive at these saving propositions of definition, for to assent to the wrong proposition was to lose, perhaps, all the fruits of a virtuous life.

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[11] See what is called the earliest authenticated Creed called by historians the Roman Creed, dating from first half of second century.

For even the simple creed which we have rehearsed bristles with questions as soon as it becomes important to think rightly about it, or to give your assent to the opinion of the right man who has thought about it for you. What should one believe about this God who is an almighty father? What about this Only Son, and this Holy Ghost somehow intimately connected with his godhead? What about this holy Church, this remission of sins, and this life everlasting?

Such questions Christians would not let alone. Why should they have left them alone if indeed their everlasting salvation depended upon their right answer to such questions?

And there were of course other motives than the attainment of salvation mixed up in discussion of such questions. The Romans were not much given to speculation for the pleasure of the exercise, but the Greeks had always been. Even among Romans, inspired by Greek oratorical models, discussion had long been cultivated as an art; long after the old republican ideals had passed away, and public questions were no longer publicly debated before the free citizens. In theological controversy he might win with your co-sectarians the advocates of another type of opinion lent a competitive zest to the process of attaining salvation.

By the middle of the fifth century, in the Greek Church, it had become the custom to recite the "Symbol of Faith" at each celebration of the communion. In the West the custom arose considerably later. When, in 589, a council was held at Toledo, to establish the Church in Spain, which had been left Arian by the Visigoths, in the now orthodox faith of Athanasius, it was ordered that, at every celebration of the mass, "as the King had suggested," the Symbol of Constantinople must be chanted aloud, before the Lord's Prayer.[12]

Christianity was jealous to appear, from the beginning, as strictly monotheistic, and in principle opposed to the many gods of heathendom. Christians believed in the Father, and his divine Son, and in a subjectively inspiring Holy Spirit. It should not be assumed from this however that they began forthwith to believe in a trinitarian godhead. They believed, as Justin Martyr writes in the second century, in the "most high God, the father of righteousness, temperance, and the other virtues." But salvation had come to them, not directly from this God, but through intermediaries. These intermediaries: this Son who had come out from God to teach men something as to his way of salvation; angels who followed and became like unto the Son; that *Spirit of Prophecy,* who had spoken through the mouth of prophets before the coming of the Son, and who had been left by the Son to speak to Christians, they were called upon likewise to hold in awe and reverence. But attempts to interpret the relation of this Son and this Spirit of Prophecy, or Holy Spirit, to the Father, were for some time feared, lest Christian monotheism be corrupted, and two or three gods be introduced. The first steps in this direction indeed met with "widespread opposition and hesitation." [13]

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[12] Hefele, *Conciliengeschicte,* sec. 287.

When, however, people began to question about the relation of the Father and the Son (for questions about the Holy Spirit same somewhat later, raising new difficulties) there came an answer, determined in its monotheistic intention, "They are not two persons, but one." But this answer, despite its excellent intention, was rejected, and became the heresy called *Monarchism,* which assumed several forms. These monarchists, with differing subtlety of explanation, fell into two general classes; those who held that this single God had operated for salvation through the man Jesus, and those who held that this single God had Himself become for a time a man, and as such had suffered for the salvation of His creatures. It was this belief which gave to this sect the name *Patripassians,* meaning, those who believe that the Father suffered.

But, if there were those who believed that Jesus, as the Christ or the Savior, was either the potency of the Father working through a man, or the Father Himself in human form; so too there were those (Theodotians they were called from the originator of this type of thought) who believed that as Christ or Savior, Jesus was the Holy Spirit.

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[13] Moeller, *History of the Christian Church,* I, 222.

Such a tendency was part of a general reaction against the hardening of traditional belief and traditional institutional organization, the dead hand of the past upon the life of the Church, more broadly to effect the life of the Church as *Montanism,* which was to carry off as a convert one of the greatest minds and most vigorous spirits of the period, the African Tertullian. Montanism protested against being bound by a faith "once for all delivered to the saints," now so long since dead, and revived the spirit of prophecy in the Christian community; claimed the direct influence of the Father and the Son through the indwelling of the Paraclete as the source of inspired truth enunciated by their prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla; encouraged ecstatic visionary experiences in which man was likened to a lyre upon which played, as the plectrum, the Holy Spirit; and found itself rejected as heresy. Not, however, without having forced to the front theological consideration of the spiritual intermediary between God and men later to enter the developed conception of the Christian God, as the third person of the Trinity.

One of the consequences of the increased importance attributed to the Holy Spirit was that the heretical views of one Noëtus, who held that the Father and the Son were a single *person,* was extended by Sabellius by including in this theory the Holy Spirit and insisting that all three names refer only to three modes of existence of a single divine nature, at one time Father, at another Son, or again Holy Spirit.

The earliest direct reference to the Trinity which has been discovered occurs in the writings of Theophilus of Antioch, dating some time during the third quarter of the second century. The controversies which followed, in an attempt to steer a course between a monotheism which seemed to deny sufficient honor to the other two persons of the godhead, and tritheism which might introduce the difficulties of polytheism, were not finished and summed up for centuries to come until Augustine, who died in

430, had given parts of thirty years to the composition of his work on the Trinity. Into all the subtleties of conception which bred heresies to right and left we cannot enter. Under the cover of trinitarian speculation almost every conceivable type of theistic speculation was inspired, limited of course by the metaphysical preconceptions and the philosophical terminology which dominated the period, and the radius of possible oscillation, between a God who was somehow *one* and somehow hardly less than *three.*

The most important practical consequences of this trinitarian speculation; the part it played in the attempts of the Emperor Constantine to unify his empire under the religious ægis of Christianity, and in the ultimate separation between the churches of the East and West, must be left for later consideration.

In the meantime the Church had many practical problems to struggle with. Its organization became clearer and harder in its forms. Ecclesiastical discipline sought definite principles under which to act, in matters of doctrine and morals. So, toward the middle of the second century the habit was formed of convoking assemblies of ecclesiastics for discussion which might end in some authoritative pronouncement.

It is interesting to note that the first of such councils of which we hear were called specifically against a movement which tended to introduce anarchy in the midst of the struggle for doctrinal unity, by claiming that mere individuals, not even among the clerical class, might be inspired by God with a message for the Christian community. So "often and in different places in Asia" the faithful met, "on the subject of Montanus and his partisans; with the result that their doctrine was examined and declared *new* and *impious*";[14] and twenty-seven bishops, meeting at Hierapolis, condemned as *false prophets* both Montanus himself and the prophetess of his sect Maximilla.[15]

But such councils had to occupy them other than questions of doctrine. The first of which a complete list of resolutions (*canons*) has come down to us, that held in the city of Elvira in Spain toward the beginning of the fourth century, gives us considerable insight into the sort of difficulties with which the Church was called upon to deal.

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[14] Fragment of Apollinarus, quoted by Eusebius. See Hefele, *History of the Councils of the Church,* French trans., I, 77-78.

[15] "Libellus Synodicus" of Pappus (Hefele, I, 78).

The first four canons deal with persons who, in the persecution under Diocletian, had sacrificed to the pagan gods. The fifth canon recites that a woman who had struck her female slave so violently that she dies within three days should do penance for seven years, if she intended a mortal wound, five years if she had not intended to kill the slave, before being again admitted to communion. The sixth states that a person who by magic or sorcery procured the death of another was to be denied communion perpetually. The twelfth canon denies perpetually the communion to a parent who sells his child into prostitution. The thirteenth to eighteenth deal with the carnal sins of *virgins* devoted to religion, and of clerics. The nineteenth and twentieth are against clerics who engage in trade or practice usury. The twenty-first deals with those who come late to church. The thirty-third states that bishops, priests and deacons should not cohabit with their wives or beget children. The thirty-sixth is against painting upon the walls of churches pictures, or "anything which might be worshiped or adored." The forty-fifth is against those who, during the time that they are being prepared for baptism, fail regularly to attend the religious services. The fifty-second is against those who placard satires or scandals upon the walls of churches. The sixty-second states that actors may be baptized, provided they desert their calling. The last, or eighty-first canon states that a married woman should not write to a layman except in the name of her husband.

We here see how Christianity aims to enter into and regulate the private lives of its adherents in a manner generally foreign to pagan religion. The Church was in every way, and upon every side, being solidified. Very soon it was to be dignified by the highest political power of the European world, but that is the story of a later chapter.

# XV

We have been considering Christianity without pausing to remember that this growing religious community was made up of persons who were at the same time citizens and subjects of the Roman Empire, the social and political conditions of which affected their lives continually. It is indeed impossible to understand the growth in membership and influence of the Church without taking account of what was happening to affect the Roman state, particularly during the century preceding the moment when, after its longest period of active persecution, Christians suddenly found themselves taken under the protection of the Emperor and the State.

Open almost any modern history of the Roman Empire and you will find a chapter or section entitled "The Crisis of the Third Century." [1] Indeed the period between the death of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 180) and the accession of Diocletian (A.D. 284) is well called the most miserable and inglorious century in Roman history.[2]

The temperate and high-minded philosopher-emperor, who left the world its most noble and beautiful expression of Stoic philosophy, insisted, against the choice and will of the Senate, in associating with himself in the imperial power his fifteen-year-old adopted son Commodus, who less than four years later became emperor. Coming to power a mere boy, incompetent, weak and careless, confronted by a hostile Senate, Commodus threw the reins of government to his favorites and proceeded, during a reign of twelve years, to *enjoy* his prerogatives. After his assassination by a group of courtiers, who feared that if they did not kill him first he might kill them, his successor reigned three months, after which one of the richest senators bought the office from the palace guard. The three armies, in quick succession, proclaimed their generals as emperor. The strongest, ablest, and in every way most distinguished of the three (Septimius Severus) managed to establish his claims, to reign eighteen years, and to leave a heritage of prestige that founded certain dynastic claims which disturbed the empire for eleven years and then gave the supreme power for a time to the Senate, under a mild-mannered emperor (Alexander Severus) who began to reign at the age of fourteen. In 235 the last of the Severi was murdered, after which the armies continued to make and destroy emperors until they themselves tired of the responsibility and put the choice up to the Senate, which body itself at first attempted to evade it. Finally they chose one of their number who only succeeded in reigning a few months. Even the ability of his successor, Probus, an excellent general who put down successfully many pretenders who arose in the different armies, was unable to stem the tide of dissolution. It was checked only when chance brought to the throne a genius, of birth so poor and obscure that his antecedents are not known, and it is not certain but that he may have been the son of an enfranchised slave: Diocletian.

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[1] Ferrero, *The Ruin of Ancient Civilization and the Triumph of Christianity* is a brilliant study of this period. Lot, *Fin du Monde Antique et Début du Moyen Age* (1927); Homo, *L'Empire Romain* (1925) may be consulted in chapters so entitled.

[2] Crees, *The Reign of The Emperor Probus,* 2.

During this period when, for a large part of the time, emperors reigned for so short a time and changed so often that their personalities influenced very little factors of civilization that affected the individual private citizen, the old Roman State disappeared, and that which arose from its ashes to revive Roman prestige was a political organism of another type.

The basis of the ancient classical civilization was aristocratic. First of all the Greeks considered themselves as a sort of aristocracy over against other peoples, lumped together by them as barbarians. After their political downfall the Romans became the aristocracy of the nations of the European world. The granting of Roman citizenship to provincials native of other parts of the empire than Italy meant the admission of certain picked persons to this aristocracy. Thus the empire, comprising many nationalities and races was in principle governed by Romans, who considered themselves above and apart from all other peoples subject to the imperial government. But among these Italians the government was entrusted to a restricted class, or rather two classes, the boundary between which gradually disappeared. The first important social-political reform after those of Augustus took place when Vespasian attempted to strengthen this aristocracy of an aristocracy, by raising a thousand provincials to the senatorial rank and installing them in Rome. However this attempt was in the end futile, and among the reforms of Diocletian was that of forming, by sweeping aside what still remained of the century-long aristocratic power, a new governing class; a hierarchy of officials of his own creation and directly responsible for their social position and political influence to him alone.

The old ideal of the state, as a form of social organization intended to secure to the citizens the best possible conditions for the development of their spiritual potentialities, disappeared. The emperor ceased to be the highest administrative of the state, intrusted above all men with the task of maintaining its ideals. He became a sort of demigod who, through his appointed officers, ruled according to his own sweet will, while his subjects, from least to greatest, bent their knees in profound obeisance before him. One of the most charming characteristics of Julius Cæsar, with whom the Roman Empire truly began, was his generosity in sharing with his officers credit for his victories, and treating them, despite his personal pride, as fellow officers. Diocletian surrounded himself with Oriental pomp, and could be approached only with the most impressive ceremony. The old governing class had been aristocrats with their own personal claims to distinction irrespective of their political function. The new governing class were officials and courtiers, whose social distinction rested entirely in the hands of the Emperor; who were important personages only by reason of services they rendered to him.

So social distinctions were flattened out. But the leveling process did not stop here. The ancient classical civilization had recognized all those differences and local loyalties which were inherent in the ancient theory that a state was a *city* together with the outlying countryside, and that an empire was a collection of such lesser political-social entities under the leadership and domination of the most powerful city among them all. The Roman Empire, at the outset, had taken care to respect so far as possible all local difference in custom, law and religion. Nevertheless, the growing cosmopolitanism of the European world, during a period of nearly five centuries, had done much to break down all such barriers, and the dissolution of the Roman ruling class more than ever before made all inhabitants of the Empire, from Mesopotamia to Spain, from Pannonia to Alexandria or Carthage, alike Roman citizens.

For long the prestige of the Empire, the strength and effectiveness of its administrative system, furnished a bond to hold together the racial conglomerate. But an empire over which rule, in quick succession and sometimes three conflicting claimants at a time, an alternating series of puppets and cutthroat adventurers, ceases to command either respect or fear. The strong hand of an efficient despot might for a time keep such an empire together by force, but there was no sentimental allegiance to carry over even the shortest period of chaotic conflict or inefficient administration.

During the third century it was more and more the Roman armies which maintained the vitality and constituted the binding force of the Empire. It was the armies which gave the Empire its only efficient rulers. It was also the armies of Rome which, before the third century began, had given the Empire a less external binding force which, during this century, spread so rapidly and far as to give promise of becoming that emotional unifying force which the state so much needed; namely, the religion of Mithra.

The religion of Mithra was of Persian origin, and appears to have entered the Empire before the end of the first century (A.D.), brought by Roman soldiers who had fought in the East against the Parthians. As was the case with Christianity, Mithraism found its earliest European converts predominantly among the lowest classes, and only began to be respectable during the age of the Antonines. To be sure Nero had accepted with pleasure from an Eastern prince the homage due to Mithra, but it was Commodus, the last of the Antonines, who became the first of Roman emperors to be initiated to the mysteries of Mithra, and to accept for himself the Mithraic and solar title *invictus* (unconquered). During the next eighty years after his death the Empire was ruled by two priests of the Sun (Heliogabalus and Aurelian), and a century after the death of Commodus, Diocletian officially declared that the Roman Emperors were the divinely born creatures of Mithra, the God of the Sun.

The antecedents of Mithraism are not altogether clearly established, and not much is known definitely as to its doctrines or ritual, but one of the most astonishing discoveries of modern archæology has been that of the extent to which it spread.[8]

One reason for the broad appeal of Mithraism was doubtless just the fact that it aimed after this universality of appeal, by consciously attempting to draw together the many currents of religious belief and practice of which the world was full at the time. But so too had the religion of Serapis, which the successors of Alexander the Great had attempted with smaller success to make a synthetic religion in which these currents of religion and philosophy might be unified and synthesized. The popular success of Mithraism, however, was due not alone to its tolerant attempt to gather all these religious and philosophic currents into its broad basin. Perhaps it was even more due to the fact that Mithra was not a God for speculating philosophers so much as a God for struggling men. (Not women, since women could not be initiated into the mysteries of Mithra, which was one great disadvantage it possessed in its struggle with Christianity.)

Mithra was not an ultimate being, a final metaphysical entity upon whom thought might rest its search for final causes. Behind him there was such a God, whom the religion for practical purposes of worship disregarded. In fact behind him there were two more shadowy deities; of good and evil, of mind and matter, of intelligence and brute material force. Mithra represents in himself neither of these ultimate metaphysical factors, but rather the mediating heroic figure who works for the salvation of mankind upon the universal stage where good and evil, mind and matter, meet in conflict. He is often represented at the moment of his birth from the barren basalt of a mountain peak, half of his body still a part of the mountain's crude unyielding structure.

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[8] Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius,* chap. vi, gives a résumé of the geographical extent of Mithraism. The most convenient short account of this religion is in Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity,* II, chap. xii.

While Mithra is the Sun, he is the Sun above all as the warming energizing force which brings life to mankind. He is the Sun unconquered by all his diurnal settings, eternal through his eclipses. He is a god who dies and is born again, and who as such promises rebirth to his worshipers who must one day die. But he is not only the faraway Sun; he is also a hero who, somewhat as Hercules, has performed and continues to perform prodigious labors for the mortals whom he loves.

It is perhaps this fact, that Mithra was thought of as a *Savior* which is the most important analogy between Mithraism and Christianity, though there are many others, particularly of ritual, between the two religions. The final struggle of Christianity with paganism was thus one between two religions, both of which had drawn together and assimilated much of the various religious currents of their time, and both of whom owed their appeal above any other one thing to the fact that their effective deity was conceived as a personal force working with men to assist them in the struggle of life, and acting in their brightness and eclipse, through life and death, for their salvation.

It was, however, another thing which this religion meant to a Roman emperor. It had been Augustus who had introduced the religious cult of the Emperor, three centuries earlier than Diocletian. But in theory this cult had been quite another matter. It was the imperial *gens,* the mystic family spirit which was in theory worshiped, and until Domitian no emperor had dared to be addressed as *divine* during his lifetime. Even this was considered by Romans an aberration from the normal. Emperors were, as a sort of final approval upon their reign, declared by senatorial decree to have been raised to a place among the immortals after their death.

To be sure, in the Asiatic provinces the Emperor was considered, according to the Oriental conception of monarchy, a sort of god even while alive. It was from this same East that Mithraism had come, and Diocletian, setting this religion upon the throne beside him, declared frankly to all the Roman world that he was to be considered as no longer merely a human being.

> The new divine majesty of the Empire was inculcated on the consciences of its subjects in tangible forms. The relation of these to the emperors and to all external acts of sovereignty became the object of a ceremonial unknown to the first two centuries of our era. The Emperor must wear a crown like the great oriental monarchs, a crown with rays like the sun, which illuminates by its grace. His raiment must be studded with precious stones. He is no longer, like Augustus, Trajan, or Vespasian, a simple mortal whom anyone can approach at any day or at any hour, who talks familiarly with other men, and who keeps open house for all free citizens. It is necessary, in order to speak to him, to observe a special procedure, and it is absolutely obligatory, on coming into his presence, to prostrate oneself in a kind of adoration.[4]

In adopting the cult of Mithra as the imperial religion the Emperor might have hoped to gain in two distinct ways. He took advantage of such popular and universal appeal as the religion possessed, particularly in the army upon which his power was ultimately based. Also he made use of this same religion as a means of solidifying the prestige of the imperial office, frankly putting himself, under cover of its belief, in a particular relation to, and intimately under the protection of the deity it worshiped. It might be added that he here introduced, under the ægis of another religion, that conception of the *divine right of kings* to be for so many subsequent centuries potent in the history of Christian Europe.

Diocletian was not only a priest and devotee of Mithra. He was also, despite his low birth, a strong Roman reactionary, who stated in an edict that it was a great crime to destroy customs established and fixed from ancient times.[5] Among these ancient institutions he wished to conserve the pagan religion, which had been so largely transformed by Neoplatonism and assimilated by Mithraism as to seem in no way inconsistent with a religion of quite different origin. Almost immediately after he became Emperor the army, into which large masses of barbarians were being admitted constantly,[6] was purified of Christians by requiring all soldiers to take part in the sacrifices, in which all Christians were forbidden to take part. A few years later came edicts ordering the destruction of Christian churches, and of their Scriptures. Christian officials were deposed by another edict; it was ordered that slaves who were found to be Christians lost their right to emancipation, and that Christian priests should be arrested and forced to sacrifice. Finally it was ordered that all Christians should be forced to sacrifice, which, if they stood firm in their faith, was equivalent to a sentence of death. The historian Eusebius, a contemporary, devotes a chapter to the martyrs who were residents of the palace of the Emperor himself.[7] Many of course recanted to save their lives, and the canons of many councils immediately following deal with the question of what discipline those should undergo who had been guilty of infidelity during these persecutions.

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[4] Ferrero, *The Ruin of Ancient Rome and the Triumph of Christianity,* 93-94.

This persecution was nominally of eight years duration, but shortly following the edicts which initiated it Diocletian retired from the active government of the Empire, compelling his associate, Maximian, to do the same. Even prior to his retirement one of the four among whom the government had been divided by Diocletian appears to have used all possible mildness in enforcing the edicts, destroying to be sure some churches, but avoiding the condemnation of Christians themselves.[8] In the dynastic struggles precipitated by the retirement of Diocletian and Maximian the persecution was suspended and renewed repeatedly in different parts of the Empire. All the facts give evidence both as to the number and influence of Christians, and to the fact that the wisdom of this last persecution was a matter of doubt. In fact in 311, more than a year before the famous Edict of Milan, in which Constantine decreed toleration to Christianity, Galerius, a former associate of Diocletian in the Empire, felt himself forced by political motives to a similar act.

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[5] Quoted by Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme,* I, 10.

[6] The Emperor Probus, a few years before the accession of Diocletian, enrolled 16,000 Germans in a single day.

[7] Eusebius of Cæsarea, *Ecclesiastical History,* viii, chap. vi.

[8] The person referred to is Constantius Chlorus, one of the two Cæsars under Diocletian's plan of government, and father of Constantine the Great.

It is important to note that this attempt to bolster the weakening Empire by drawing to its support the religion of Mithra lasted less than twenty years. From the standpoint of the Roman Emperors the failure of this attempt was unfortunate, since the theory of the religion of Mithra made it a more effective bulwark of the monarch's sanctity than Christianity. To be sure the cult of the Emperor, which before Diocletian had flourished in parts of the Empire, and which Mithraism fortified and more clearly declared, never altogether died out in the Byzantine Empire.[9] Nevertheless Constantine, become a Christian, did not longer allow himself to be adored as a god.[10] And in Europe generally the deterent effect of Christianity upon the semidivine prerogatives of rulers was such that, although it was common among Germanic tribes to consider their rulers as partaking of the divine before the advent of Christianity among them, their conversion robbed these kings of the older religious basis of their sanctity, so that it was not again until the eighth century that, in the Frankish Kingdom, and in England, Christian monarchs, after the analogy of the Hebrew kings, were invested with sanctity by being anointed.[11] This sanctity, however, was not without its embarrassing aspects, since the ecclesiastics were not slow to remind the anointed monarch that it was "the unction, an act *episcopal* and spiritual" to which, more than to their terrestrial power, he owed his royal dignity,[12] so that, as a Church Council shortly after enunciated, the Pope was superior to the King, since it was to the Pope that the monarch owed his consecration.[13]

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[9] Brehier et Batiffol, *Les Survivances du Culte Imperial Romain.*

[10] Lot, *Fin du Monde Antique et le Début du Moyen Age,* 99.

[11] Bloch, *Les Rois Thaumaturges,* Chap. ii and Appendix III.

[12] The Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims to Charles the Bald, in 868.

Constantine doubtless had not measured the full consequences of his act when he wrapped a Christian cloak about his imperial dignity, and, since he might exchange the rayed crown of Mithra for the nimbus of a Christian saint and continue all the elaborate etiquette with which Diocletian had separated himself from his subjects he was perhaps little embarrassed by the change. But the sanctity of the imperial personage was not the only ideal or institution of the ancient world which Christianity sapped and undermined.

Just as Christianity lowered, in consistent theory if not altogether in practical attitude, the monarch's royal dignity, making of him a mere human being of no more importance in the eyes of God than his meanest subject commanded to do obeisance before him, it raised in dignity that tremendous human mass upon which many economic and social institutions of the ancient world had rested; namely, the *slaves.*

It is almost impossible for us to conceive the importance of slavery to the ancient social system. Not only agriculture and household service, but in industry, in the arts and crafts the slave labor doubtless outnumbered the free more than ten to one. If a baker left to some heir his bakery with its furnishings, it was declared, by legal decision, that the slaves who assisted in the work of the bakery were by implication, and without direct mention, included in the gift.[14] On a merchant vessel, not the sailors alone, but even the captain and the supercargo were as a usual thing slaves. The rich Roman prided himself upon the fact that he bought nothing; all he used or consumed had been produced for him by his slaves.[15] The city household of a rich Roman might include several hundred slaves devoted to the personal service of himself, his family, and his guests. It is there-

[13] The Council of Saint Macre. Both references are quoted in Bloch, 71.

[14] Allard, *Les Esclaves Chrétiens,* 17.

[15] Note for example the boasting of Trimalchio, in the *Satyricon* of Petronius Arbiter, sec. 48.

fore a conservative conclusion that in the city of Rome during the first three or four centuries of our era the slaves outnumbered the free population, and in the rural districts the proportion of slaves could scarcely have been smaller.

Both economic conditions and moral considerations had begun to lessen the number of slaves before Christianity had in a broad way affected the social structure of society, and it is also impossible for us to forget that Christians have, at a far later period of history, been able to accommodate their religion to the existence of this institution. Nevertheless in Christianity the distinction between the slave and the free man was in theory completely set aside, and Christian customs gradually worked toward making this good in practice. The subsequent history of Christian Europe and America forces modesty upon claims which may be made as to the influence of Christianity upon slavery. However it was important that slavery, consistent in theory with the religion and ethics of the ancient world, became inconsistent with the value put upon all human beings, irrespective of class, by the teachings of Jesus. Also Christianity gave to the slave himself a sense of human dignity which might affect his whole moral outlook. When he might worship a God who had been punished by death upon the cross, the stigma of belonging to a class for which this type of punishment was reserved as particularly degrading could hardly remain the same. While practically Christianity worked no broad change in the institution, under its influence new types of attitude and action between master and slave were given birth, many examples of which may be found by the apologist. Perhaps the immediate effect of Constantine's conversion upon the institution of slavery is never better illustrated than his decree that, in future, fugitive slaves were not to be branded upon the face, "where rested the image of divine beauty," and in the substitution for such marks of a collar or a tag, bearing the name and address of the slave's master, and perhaps in addition, a Christian symbol.[16]

In addition to the social theories inherent in the teachings of

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[16] Allard, *Les Esclaves Chrétiens,* 468.

Jesus which deprived distinctions of birth or social caste of an unquestioned foundation, Christians inherited a conception of the significance of the political state and the whole social order that the state upheld which was disturbing to ancient ideals. For centuries not statesmen alone, but philosophers, poets and orators had devoted themselves to the task of creating a form of government which would cause virtue, truth, and beauty to flourish. In theory the ancient classical civilization never questioned the fact that the free citizen should develop his highest potentialities as a citizen of his particular state, and that the state existed in order that he might do so. Jesus, in his general teaching with respect to the *kingdom of God,* in his adroit answer to the question about the tribute money, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's,"[17] struck a blow at the foundation of this conception. It was clearly implied that the state, its forms and its decrees, was immaterial to that which was the chief concern of Christians. Even more than that, his own personal experience, his clash with and ultimate rejection by the political powers with whom his ministry had brought him into contact, determined the conviction that the political state was the organized force of that *kingdom of this world,* which was in principle opposed to the eternally important kingdom of God.

How this antagonism between the Christian and the organized world about him was intensified by the early experiences of the Christian community, their sense of moral separation from, and their persecution by the political state, has been already discussed. But the attitude of Christians had far-reaching consequences. At the very moment when Rome felt most need of its armies, when recruiting had become, except among the barbarians of the north and northeast, more and more difficult, Christian authorities were advising their coreligionists that it was not fitting for a Christian to bear arms. During the crisis of the third century the Church, becoming bolder and bolder, taught more and more clearly that Christians should not seek employment under a government many of the acts of which were inconsistent with their faith. He could not seek any office with which religious duties were even indirectly connected, because the religion of the state was contrary to his faith. He could not seek office which might make him in some way responsible for the holding of performances in the theaters nor games in the arenas, for all such spectacles were considered inconsistent with Christian ethics, and he was expressly forbidden to take part in or witness them. He could not connect himself with the Roman administration of law, since he might be called upon to judge or to condemn his brethren on account of their faith. There was indeed little in which he could serve the state, and the higher the office the greater the probability that he would soon be called upon to act inconsistently with his faith. So, the worse the state became, the less was it possible for Christians to participate in attempts to save it. For the educated and intelligent Christian, if he did not wish to follow the example of many of the more fastidious and cultivated Romans who retired to their country estates and lived lives of luxurious and cultivated leisure, there was nothing to do except to become either a cleric or a monk. Indeed many did this, and so doing bequeathed their riches, if they happened to be rich, to the Church, so that even before the end of the third century the Church had begun to accumulate property, used to build churches, and to carry on what was for that time the most extensive and wisely administered benevolence and social relief that had been anywhere even attempted.

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[17] Matthew XXII. 21.

In short, at the accession of Constantine, Christianity was, from the standpoint of the Roman political and administrative system, decidedly a liability.

# XVI

In February, 313, three months after he had won a signal victory over one of the four surviving claimants to the imperial power, and entered Rome in triumph, Constantine, together with his brother-in-law Licinius, signed the famous Edict of Milan, sending it afterwards for approval to the third member of the surviving imperial triumvirate, Maximin.[1] Omitting less important passages, and allowing for minor differences in the two texts which have come down to us, the edict was as follows:

> Immediately after having arrived at Milan, we, Constantine and Licinius, conferring as to what was advantageous and best for the commonweal, concluded that . . . the reverence paid to the Divinity merited our first attention. We have decided to accord to Christians and all others liberty to follow whatever form of religious worship they may choose, that whatever there be of divinity and heavenly consequence may be propitious and favorable to us and everyone under our dominion. It has seemed to us a good and reasonable plan not to refuse to any of our subjects, whether Christians or of any other form of worship, perfect freedom to follow the cult of his choice, so that each may procure for us, in his habitual manner of worship, the favor and benevolence of the Divinity. . . . It is worthy of our age, and of the peace which the Empire enjoys, that all our subjects should have liberty to worship the Divinity according to the manner of their choice, so that no form of worship shall lack its due portion of devotion. (Text as translated from the Greek of Eusebius.)

This edict, though couched in general terms, and showing a desire to be on good terms with whatever gods there may be, was nevertheless intended particularly for Christians. Five times the phrase is repeated, "To Christians and all other persons." It moreover specifically commands the return of all confiscated prop-

[1] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* IX, ix, states that the edict was sent to Maximin, and preserves a letter sent by Maximin to the governors of provinces under his power, ordering clemency to Christians but not accepting the principle of toleration.

erty of the Church, even that which, subsequent to confiscation, had been presented to individuals.

It was moreover no mere command to cease persecution. Such commands had been issued before, one by Galerius in 311, who commands, in return for this *indulgence,* the prayers of Christians for his health, the general prosperity of the Empire, and the preservation of his family,[2] which was followed shortly by a letter of Maximin to the governors of provinces under him ordering the cessation of persecution on the ground that experience had proven that there was no way to conquer the obstinacy of the Christians.[3] The Edict of Milan clearly enunciated the principle of religious toleration, and based it, neither upon grounds of clemency nor political prudence, but upon grounds of reason and religion.

We may properly pass over here the political vicissitudes which in 323-324 put into the single hands of Constantine the imperial power which had been divided by Diocletian, but this edict is of such importance in the history of Christianity, and of Europe, that it merits some words as to events which led to, and motives which instigated it.

The historians Eusebius, a contemporary, and Socrates, writing in the early fifth century, state that Constantine, during his struggles to attain to the government of the Empire, had reflected upon the ill-success of Diocletian and those who after him struggled to gain power, in their superstitious following of many gods; and that he had compared favorably with this his own father's monotheistic conviction.[4] It would also appear that his father's monotheistic belief led him to enforce half-heartedly Diocletian's edict of persecution.

In fact the Edict of Milan gives evidence of a philosophical monotheistic belief rather than one specifically Christian, though it must be here taken into account that Licinius also signed the decree, and that he never became a Christian, so that to a degree the edict must have been an accommodation between the opinions of two persons. But there is still further evidence in the same direction. We may read, in Eusebius' biography of Constantine a prayer which that emperor had prepared for the use of the soldiers in his army, which begins: "We recognize that you are the sole God, and avow that you are our lord. It is by your aid that we gain victory and rout our enemies." [5] Here again, however, it must not be forgotten that the prayer was composed for use by soldiers few of whom were Christians.

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[2] *Ibid.,* VII, xvii.

[3] *Ibid.,* IX, ix.

[4] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine,* I, xxvii. Socrates, *History of the Church,* I, ii.

There are, however, still other arguments against the sincerity of Constantine's Christian allegiance. He delayed his baptism until shortly before his death, but this again was not uncommon, since baptism was thought to wash away all preceding sin, and by postponing it one might have hope of facing death with fewer sins laid up against his account. But this delay does not exhaust the evidence against his Christianity. He assumed, and never laid aside, the title of *Pontifex Maximus,* in virtue of which he was High Priest of the ancient pagan state religion. Also, after his death, he was declared *divine,* as had been the pagan emperors before him. He also maintained friendly relations with pagan philosophers and men-of-letters, with one of whom he was indeed intimate,[6] and there was an early tradition that the true cause of his conversion to Christianity was the fact that a Christian bishop offered him purification for a dynastic assassination of which he had been guilty.[7]

Constantine himself, it is not difficult to believe, attributed his conversion to a dream, or a vision, experienced shortly before the battle before Rome which preceded the Edict of Milan, as the result of which he inscribed the monogram of Christ upon his banner, and imprinted it upon the shields of his soldiers. This experience became in time so elaborately supernatural as to excite the suspicion of historians, but there is to-day abundant evidence to prove that, certainly not later than 317, he had embraced Christianity for himself and his family, and three years earlier the monogram of Christ is found upon coins minted apparently under orders from him.[8]

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[5] *Ibid.,* IV, xx.

[6] Sopater, a Neoplatonic philosopher.

[7] This tradition is excellently refuted by the fifth-century church historian Sozomen who preserves it. (Sozomen, *History of the Church,* I, v).

It is therefore hardly too much to believe that Constantine entered battle, toward the end of 312, with an opponent who counted upon the pagan gods, having put himself and his army under the protection of the Christian God, very likely as trying out by comparison the power and benevolence of this deity, and that the victory which followed committed him to Christianity.

The idea that Constantine was a cool and calculating skeptic, who embraced Christianity in an external fashion for the purpose of gaining the support of Christians is not tenable. In the first place it was not an age of rationalism or critical doubt. Had Contantine been, like Julian under whom came a pagan reaction, a devotee of philosophy, we may judge from the example of Julian that he would likely have been even more superstitious than he was. Moreover there could have seemed to be hardly the practical advantage in gaining the support of this religion which events proved. Far less than half of his subjects were Christians, and least of all in the portions of the Empire where he was personally best known before becoming Emperor. We have already mentioned ways in which Christianity contributed to the forces which were weakening the ancient civilization. There is nothing in the life or statesmanship of Constantine which gives us reason to credit him with prophetic insight. In his personal acts and his political policy he acted in much the same spirit as emperors before him, removing by assassination those of his relatives whom he feared to be plotting against him, or otherwise a menace to his rule or to his dynastic plans. If he supported his new religion generously, so too would any pagan have done for the deity to whom he believed himself to owe his power. Constantine doubtless turned to Christianity, as so many people in that and preceding centuries, in order to see what this religion could do for him, and having come to attribute his continuing successes to the new God he had chosen, he became more and more zealous in furthering the religion of that God. In the immediate future,

[8] Lot, *Fin du Monde Antique et le Début du Moyen Age,* 37.

indeed, the adoption by him of Christianity less affected the social conditions of the Roman world than did his act affect the religion which he had chosen to support. The other religions of the Empire were for long, as the Edict of Milan implied they should be, left practically undisturbed. A few conspicuous temples were indeed closed, less for religious reasons than because they had become social pesthouses.[9] Gladiatorial contests were forbidden, an edict was published against male prostitution in Egypt, where it was a part of the religious ceremonies to insure the orderly rise and fall of the Nile.[10]

The general immediate effect of Constantine's conversion upon the social and political condition of the Empire may be summed up in some sentences written to defend Christianity against the charge of Gibbon and others, that this religion had been an important cause of the downfall of Rome.

> From Constantine to Theodosius (died in 395) all the emperors, with the exception of one, are Christians, yet one does not note that the Empire underwent important changes in the conduct of affairs. The machine operated much the same as before. The motion communicated to it by Diocletian continued. Only in some few of the acts of Constantine did the religious beliefs of Constantine make themselves felt; most often the laws were drawn up in the same spirit as those of the pagan princes; in them he continued to speak the same language, that of a sovereign who thought of himself as a god; he continues there to speak of his *divinity,* his *eternity* (epithets of Mithra). . . . I imagine that in reading them one who judged of public affairs only by such documents would have thought nothing changed in the Empire save the (name of) the emperor.[11]

But the conversion of the Emperor, followed in a few years by the defeat and death of his one remaining colleague in the imperial office, did have tremendous immediate consequences for Christianity.

Previously there had been some few Christians in conspicuous social or political positions, some even who by inheritance occupied the position of priests to the pagan gods.[12] But previously there had been no social or political inducement to conversion. Immediately the contrary became the case. The whole system of social caste, with its *nobilissimes, perfectissimes, clarissimes, respectables,* and *illustres* was based upon the hierarchy of imperial functionaries, and was thus an aristocracy dependent entirely upon the Emperor. Needless to say many lost little time in becoming Christians, by whose conversion neither Church nor State gained anything of value. The State however doubtless did gain by being able to avail itself of the service of Christians who had previously felt unwilling to serve it, and we read in Eusebius that he gave the governorships of many provinces to Christians, making it indeed difficult for pagans to hold this office by forbidding them to publicly offer sacrifice to the pagan gods.[13]

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[9] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine,* III, lv, lvi, lviii.

[10] *Ibid.,* IV, xxv.

[11] Boissier, *La Fin du Paganism,* II, 349-350 (parenthetic explanatory phrases added).

It had been becoming for some time more and more respectable. Now suddenly it became politic for every person of social ambition, every careerist, to get himself baptized. The effect upon the membership of the Church may easily be imagined.

The Church not only accumulated new members on the basis of motives less consistent with its ideal ends than ever before, but its new position in the world affected the motives of many who had previously been led to embrace the prescribed religion. Already in the preceding century the Church, no longer occupying the same position of heroic isolation which had earlier strengthened it, had attracted many who were unable to withstand the temptation to recant which the Diocletian persecutions brought. One of the first acts of Constantine in which he exercised his authority in the interest of the constitutional doctrine of the religious community he had taken under his protection was that of commanding two Councils for the purpose of putting down a heresy which purposed to shut permanently out of the Church those persons whose faith had been unable to withstand persecution; and afterwards, when the canons of these two councils had shown themselves unable to uproot this heresy (Donatism), to use his imperial force in putting it down.

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[12] The Council of Elvira (306) passed three canons dealing with Christians who were by inheritance *flamens,* that is sacrificial priests. Hefele, *Conciliengeschicte,* I, 137.

[13] *Life of Constantine,* II, xliv.

In short, the Church, which had previously broadened by adopting and adapting itself to more and more of the idealistic currents of the European world, now for the first time opened the still wider portal of worldly interest and ambition, and many came in thereby, or found no longer temptation to leave the fold when opportunity more immediate than its heavenly promises beckoned from the portico.

This inward effect upon the membership of the Church was reinforced by evident external advantages which the religious community immediately began to enjoy. To begin with that element of the imperial bounty which was most consistent with its own inherent ideal purpose, the Emperor almost immediately began himself to distribute alms, among others to the widows and orphans who, from New Testament times, had been committed to the particular care of Christians; and in furnishing dowries to well-born maidens without near relations, so that they might be enabled to marry rich husbands, his largess became part of the largess of the Christians in general to the unfortunate.[14] So too, when he gave to one of his subjects "money, to another landed estates, to others the office of Consul, Senator, Governor of a Province, or Count of the first, second, or third order," or to others the "title of Perfectissime," inventing new titles so that he might gratify "a great number of persons," his acts were no longer merely those of a generous prince, but the virtues of a Christian emperor.[15]

But the Church not only drew to itself as a portion of Christian benevolence, the virtues of a large-minded monarch in the act of solidifying his personal power. As an institution it profited by this liberality. Their clergy were exempted from public functions[16] and Church property was exempted from taxation. In some places churches were endowed out of the public funds of the towns in which they were situated, and in others the local Christian congregation was given, as a place of worship, a little used pagan temple.[17]

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[14] Eusebius, *Ibid.*, I, xliii.

[15] *Ibid.*, IV, i.

[16] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, X, vii.

Incidentally Constantine provided financially for the preparation of fifty manuscripts of the Bible, upon which manuscripts more than any others the text of the present Bible rests.

Also, to the profit of the Church, Constantine gratified his passion for building monumental edifices. Following the pagan tradition that a religious edifice was first of all a shrine, erected at some place where the god to whom it was dedicated was particularly present, he first began to build churches at *holy places* in Palestine; at the Holy Sepulcher, discovered again after the centuries which had elapsed since a few disciples visited it to find it empty; on the Mount of Olives and at Bethlehem. Then at his first official residence, Nicomedia at the eastern end of the Propontis in Asia Minor, and in Byzantium, finally chosen by him as his capital, and renamed after him, Constantinople.

These churches, the first costly and sumptuous edifices built to house Christian worship, and of which Constantine himself built more than a dozen, including several in Rome, influenced the architecture of Christian churches for centuries to come, and their decoration gave an impetus to Christian art which suddenly transformed it from a predominantly funerary art, left little sphere but that of symbolizing the hope of immortality upon Christian tombs, to something even more than a decorative art called upon to embellish magnificent monumental structures.[18] For the Church, finding itself beset with a large number of applicants for baptism, of whom most could not read, and doubtless pressed for time to explain to so many the mysteries of a faith which was becoming more and more complicated, with heresies on every side, and a new political motive to uniformity of faith, gave to the artists the new task of assisting the clergy in the instruction of the faithful as to the subject matter of their faith. The Church built at Bethlehem was decorated with sixteen scenes from the life of Jesus, and that of the Lateran at Rome with a whole cycle of incidents chosen from the two testaments. The worship of saints and martyrs, inspired by and taking the place of the old Greek reverence paid to heroes and demigods, furnished another group of material for the artists. But this sudden broadening out had its dangers. A Prefect of Constantinople, wishing to build at his own expense a church in honor of the holy martyrs, wished to cover the sanctuary walls with their scenes of martyrdom, but felt it fitting that the less sacred walls of the nave should be ornamented with hunting scenes, which suggestion did not meet with the approval of the ecclesiastics.[19] Little by little conventions were formed as to what subjects were to be admitted, and what parts of church were most appropriate for the display of particular subjects.

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[17] Moeller, *History of the Christian Church,* I, 299.
[18] See Brehier, *L'Art Chétien,* chaps. iii, iv.

The pilgrimage of Helena, mother of the Emperor, to the holy places of Palestine, not only resulted in the building of churches at the principal localities connected with the life of Jesus, but it inspired other religious pilgrimages, and the building of other churches in different cities of the Empire.

One result of this pilgrimage of Helena was the discovery of the tomb of Jesus, above the place of which had been built a temple to the most disreputable Venus. This temple was of course torn down to be replaced by a church, the most splendid of all, to a description of which Eusebius devotes several short chapters.[20] Near the tomb were discovered three crosses. As these crosses were evidently those of Jesus and the two thieves crucified with him, it became important to discover upon which of them Jesus had hung. The Bishop Macarius displayed the wisdom of which he was full by devising the proper method of settling this difficulty. Having used for the purpose of test a "lady of quality who had been long ill," they applied to her body the crosses in succession until her cure attested the discovery of the *true cross*.[21]

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[19] *Ibid.*, 58.

[20] *Life of Constantine*, III, xxx-xl.

[21] It should be mentioned that, in telling of the discovery of the tomb of Jesus, Eusebius says nothing of the cross. See however the fifth-century historians; Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret.

The conversion of Constantine made the dignitaries of the Church a part of the courtier throng which surrounded the Emperor, and the elaborate court ceremony was not without its effects upon Christian ritual. The Church dignitaries would be the last to forget that they represented a more august Master than was the Emperor himself, and their satisfaction in the position they occupied at court was not the less dignified when they came as ambassadors of a King more exalted than he to whose throne-room they were honorably admitted. What more fitting than that the majesty of God be surrounded with impressive ceremony which that of the imperial reception room should not entirely outshine.

Dignified and sacramental ritual had entered the Church services by way of the mysteries, and justified, like so many other things, by reference to the Old Testament.

The *cult of relics,* connected with magical beliefs and practices in many parts of the world, was not uncommon among the Greco-Roman inhabitants of the Mediterranean Basin, though it had long since passed from among the religious practices of the Jews. Among the Christians it appears to have begun at much the same point where the Christians had found it in the pagan world, with reverence paid to, and belief in the magical efficacy of the tombs of martyrs, who replaced among recently converted pagans the deified or semideified mythical heroes of the pagan mythology. Toward the middle of the fifth century Juliana Anicia, granddaughter of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, caused an inscription to be put upon the walls of a church built by her in honor of Saint Polyeucte, which contains such phrases as these:

> She has made for the immortal Polyeucte a dwelling worthy of him. . . . How many dwelling places of which God avails himself has your hand constructed? . . . You have . . . raised throughout the world temples to the innumerable Blessed Ones, revering always the servants of the heavenly God. . . . In return, servants of the King of the Heavens, you to whom she has offered presents, to whom she has built temples, be propitious to her; protect her and her sons and her granddaughters as well. May the unspeakable glory of her virtuous posterity endure so long as the sun drives on its shining chariot.[22]

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[22] *Anthologie Palatine,* I, 10.

Such an inscription might without change have been inscribed upon a pagan temple.

But the cult of saints and their relics did not stop with the building of temples to house their remains. As time elapsed there ceased to be new martyrs, and those of the period of persecution were too few to give a saint for every church which was built. Also the magic of some proved more efficacious than that of others. The bodies of martyrs, or those believed to be such, were often cut into small pieces and generously distributed as widely as possible. Sometimes they were bought or stolen. Even the various pieces of such sainted bodies came to have a nomenclature descriptive of their relative importance, until the carcass of a saint had its more and less desirable *cuts*, much as the meat in a butcher's shop. Also the magical efficacy of the sacred bodies was believed to communicate itself, similarly to widespread phenomena of magic contagion, to all sorts of articles supposed at some time to have come into physical contact with the body of the saint.

How far Christianity had got from Judaism is in few things more clearly shown than this practice of making the Christian places of worship at the same time tombs in which all or some part of a martyred saint was preserved, the relic itself or its encasing to be upon special cases touched by worshipers hoping to receive some wished for result from the magic power believed to be inherent in the relic. Such a practice could never have been admitted among the Jews, to whom any contact with a dead body was a pollution. Indeed the disinterring and dismemberment of buried bodies did not pass uncriticized either by pagans or Christians. Before the end of the fourth century a law was passed forbidding the moving of a buried body or its sale or dismembering. When, in the sixth century, a Byzantine Empress wrote to ask Pope Gregory the Great to send her the head of St. Paul he refused, saying he could not divide the body of a saint, and sent her instead a cloth which had been in contact with his body and had the same miraculous power she might have hoped for in the part of the body she had wanted.

# XVII

THE Church which had come to be not only a lawful and protected but even a favored institution was doubtless first conscious of its new advantages. The new stability which the institution had gained increased the amount of money and property it received as gifts, and it might now receive legacies. The Christian communities which had attempted before to settle some of their civil disputes among themselves, without recourse to the public courts of law, now began to see certain judicial powers, recognized by the state, drift into the hands of their higher clergy, together with a vague right of *intercession* in the interest of mercy after sentence had been passed by the secular courts. Their churches came to take over from the pagan temples the right of *asylum,* naturally often abused by criminals and feigned converts who sought protection against the secular administrative forces.

In all this was the germ of that *canon law,* which was to become a recognized part of European legal machinery and to complicate the whole question of judicial jurisdiction for centuries.

But the institution which might now, in a way hitherto impossible, feel itself a recognized part of the social mechanism, so too had become in a new sense an object of important interest to the state and to its chief. The Emperor gained, inevitably in a state the form of which had become frankly autocratic, in reciprocity for his protection, the right to ask questions about, and to play a part in, such internal affairs of the Church as might affect the social atmosphere or the political interests of the Prince and his advisers. This meant the heresy and schism in the Church—which a half-century earlier might have caused in administrative circles of the Empire some such amusements as the Roman Catholic sometimes feels in contemplating the numerous sects of Protestantism—became affairs of state. A Roman army might be sent against misguided Christians, who persisted in believing it proper to exclude perpetually from the blessings of eternal life those who had escaped being burned to death by purchasing a certificate saying they had burned incense to a deified Roman emperor; as indeed an army was sent by Constantine against the Donatists in Africa.

Both heresy and schism had surrounded the Christian community from the days when first, themselves heretic and schismatic, they had fronted the growing antagonism of the Jews. The whole process of defining and developing their faith in its European environment had been one in which dangerous heresy-breeding bacteria had fallen to right and left every time that some fertile mind turned bottom uppermost some new soil for speculative fertilization. Had not the Christians in Corinth been rebuked by Paul for saying, some, "I am of Paul," others, "I am of Apollos, or of Peter or of Christ?" Hitherto such delicate situations, from the time when at Antioch Paul had stood against Peter, face to face, charging him with inconsistent conduct, in the matter of how much or little Christians were bound by Jewish religious customs,[1] had been met and settled by Christians among themselves, to be left behind as a decision as to the direction in which the thought of the general body of Christians was to move in matters of doctrine or practice. So might doubtless the Arian controversy have passed, but a single ripple in the general flurry of monarchism, had it not become a political question, to influence European history for more than two centuries.

Little is indeed known of Arius personally. His works, in the abjuration which made of him for orthodox Christianity a sort of archfiend, have disappeared. His rigorous asceticism and pious life were admitted even by his enemies, and his cause came so near to triumphing that perhaps no Christian anti-Christ ever became so near to being one of Christianity's most reputed saints.

Though the dogmatic theories of Arius seem to us of considerably less importance than their immediate political consequences, some brief account of them may properly detain us. We are told that the controversy arose in the house of Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria. In a theological discussion the Bishop, "too desirous of displaying his theological prowess," advanced a statement to which Arius took exception as tending toward a certain well-known heresy.[2] Arius then advanced his theory, and a discussion began until, "in this dispute it came about, as in disputes usually, that each party in the discussion desired to get the best of it."[3]

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[1] Galatians II. 11-15.

The theory of Arius, as he later developed and defended it, was that God was one in substance, and that God had existed before the Son, therefore the Son was not eternal like the Father, and the Father had not always been a father. Arius himself affirmed that the Son was both *perfect God* and *only-begotten,* and that through him God had made the material universe, and that although the product and offspring of the Father he was not as any other thing which had been generated; all of which would make it appear that his intention truly was, not to belittle the the theological personality of the Second Person of the Trinity, but rather to safeguard the unity of God, a worthy but always dangerous ambition in those days when the passage between Scylla and Charybdis was so crooked and narrow.

Bishop Alexander, as it appears, was himself not certain as to whether or not Arius was right, but deciding finally that he was not, and Arius being unwilling to recant, Alexander excommunicated him together with about a dozen priests and deacons. The excommunicated then brought their grievance to the attention of some near-by bishops, finding several influential adherents,[4] with the result that the controversy reached such proportions as to come to the ears of the Emperor.

The first step of Constantine shows plainly his displeasure that the peace and unity of the religion to which he had given his support should be disturbed by dissension about a matter which seemed to him of little importance. He sent the Bishop of Cordova in Spain, who seems, like many other good bishops, to have been more distant from his episcopal see than from the ears of the Emperor, with a letter addressed to Alexander and Arius.

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[2] Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History,* I, v.

[3] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History,* I, xv.

[4] *Ibid.,* I, xv.

In this letter he recites how he had attempted to unite all his subjects in a single faith, believing that the removal of religious differences would react toward the greater unity of the Empire. This purpose Alexander and Arius had disturbed by entering into a controversy that seemed to him frivolous and little worthy to be discussed with such heat. Such questions were not necessary to be discussed, and their discussion usually the employment of persons with too little to occupy them, who sought by such speculation to *exercise their wits,* and it was therefore more proper, if indulged in, that it be rather kept secret than published lightly before people generally. He therefore urged them to demand pardon, each of the other, since they could not properly govern the people of God while their minds were filled with a subject so frivolous. It was not necessary that all think alike about such impertinent questions. They might well nevertheless preserve unity and peace, being of one mind about matters of greater importance. He exhorts them to the conservation of charity, the deposit of (apostolic) faith and the precepts of the law, that he might be relieved from the anxiety they had caused him, and that there might be restored to him the beauty of daylight and the customary nightly repose, since while they thus quarreled he could not restrain himself from *melting into tears and passing the rest of his life in sorrow.*[5]

Unfortunately, however, the emperor's repose and peace of mind were still for a long time to be disturbed. Athanasius, Alexander's deacon, and later to follow him as bishop, entered the lists and the preservation of the faith from the Arian danger was to furnish him from henceforth the focus of activity and adventure for his eventful life. The Bishop Alexander was apparently not much of a theologian, but Athanasius had written theological treatises while still a boy being brought up and educated in the bishop's house. Soon he was the leader of the anti-Arian forces, doubtless having had a hand in the writing of some seventy letters written by Alexander on the subject, while still but his deacon and secretary.

[5] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine,* chaps. lxiv-lxxii.

For some reason the controversy caught the idle public curiosity. Songs of Arius were sung by fishermen and peddlers, the theater audiences of Byzantium were amused with jokes on the quarrels of Christians. Finally an Arian mob pelted and broke down some imperial statues, and Constantine, now angered, sent a manifesto to the Prefect of Egypt for publication, and wrote a letter to Arius in which he descended to personal abuse, sarcasm and threats. When Arius was summoned to a conference in Nicomedia, he had his inning, confusing the emperor in theological subtleties, until the assembly was dissolved with the promise of Arius, rather equivocal to be sure, that he would not again fall into errors. Still the controversy flourished, and finally Constantine decided to call all of the Christian bishops to a conference: that momentous Nicene Council, the first General Council of the entire Church, as it is called, though attended predominantly by the clergy of the East—more than two hundred and fifty bishops, Eusebius says, with almost innumerable priests, deacons, acolytes and others who had come with them.[6] Athanasius reports the number of bishops as three hundred and eighteen, which is the number tradition has accepted.

The Council was opened, apparently on the fourteenth of June in the year A.D. 325 in a hall of the imperial palace at Nicea. Eusebius was much impressed by the silence in which the seated bishops awaited the entrance of the emperor. First, after the seating of the members of the Council, three members of the imperial family, and then, not the emperor's personal guard, as was the custom, but only such members of the court as were Christians. Finally, like an angel of God, the Emperor entered, surrounded by notables. All eyes were blinded by the glory of his purple robes, and the jewels with which it was adorned. These were however but his outward ornaments. As for the inward, his bearing was appropriate, his eyes were kept modestly lowered. Having reached the place of honor he halted, and a low chair of gold was brought and placed for him. Then he sat and the bishops, who had risen at his entrance, were seated; the presiding bishop at the right of the emperor rose and pronounced some words of courtesy, while the whole assembly sat silent, their eyes fixed upon Constantine. Then the emperor rose and welcomed them all, stating that the divisions in the Church had appeared to him more dangerous than any external wars, and that their presence brought him a satisfaction which would only be perfect when he should have found them all of a single mind and prepared to preach all of them a single faith.[7]

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[6] *Ibid.,* III, viii.

Within a few days it appears that, not without difficulty, a *symbol of faith* had been prepared, and signed by all but five of the bishops present, four of these five later signing, not however, in all cases without mental reservations.

An air of secrecy still surrounded the creedal symbols[8] and there were subsequent reasons for desiring to see expressed in the Nicene Symbol matters of doctrine only later defined. However the historian Eusebius sent the text in a letter to his church, from which it was later copied in a work of Athanasius. Despite variations in other sources this is usually accepted as the authentic text, and reads as follows:

> We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things seen and unseen, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-born, in all things of the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of the same substance with the Father, through whom all things were created, both in heaven and earth, who for us men and for our salvation descended and was incarnate, and was made man, suffered and rose the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit. Those who say: there was a time when he (the Son) was not, that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was created from nothing, or assert that he is of another substance or being or that the Son of God is created, subject to change or alteration the catholic church anathemitizes.

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[7] *Ibid.,* III, x-xii.

[8] "I intended to transcribe the symbol which was adopted in that august assembly, but virtuous persons, intimate friends of mine, advised me to remain silent about matters which should be known only to the priests and the believers." Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History,* I, xx.

Having obtained the signature of this symbol the council addressed itself to the question of the day upon which Easter should properly be celebrated. Concerning this matter there had been much controversy which need not detain us. The council then passed twenty canons (here again, as in the case of the Creed, there was later temptation to attribute subsequent decisions to this council) upon various subjects, after which it dissolved, in hope no doubt that the troublesome question of Arianism had been settled.

Unfortunately this was far from being the case. If one were tempted to speculate as to the relation between the Father and the Son the Arian answer was to most persons simpler than the orthodox position. There were Arian sympathizers at court, indeed in the very family of the emperor, who himself was more interested in peace among Christians than in the Nicene Symbol. The persistence of Athanasius, who upon one occasion went from Alexandria to Constantinople, waited for the emperor in the street, grasped the bridle of his horse and demanded another council, exasperated the emperor. In his wearied old age Constantine turned from the adherents of the Nicene confession of faith to the Arians, hoping that through them peace might be established. From this time until 381 the Arians had on the whole the better of it, despite a number of councils and synods at which some sort of compromise was attempted. In the course of these difficulties Athanasius was exiled, was forced to remove himself voluntarily from his episcopal territory, was deposed, was declared against by a council held at Milan. But his persistence was indomitable, and he finally died in Alexandria, the city of his episcopate, eight years before the great Synod of Constantinople put an end to the Arian controversy (381).

The settlement of the question of Arianism within the Catholic Church was not however the end of its influence in European history. During the Arian period Christianity spread from Constantinople to several of the barbarian chieftains who were at different times camped about the confines of the empire. Of such conversions the most portentous was that of the Goths. Ufilas, who translated the Bible for his Gothic countrymen, was converted by Arian Christians, and was in 341 consecrated Bishop of the Goths at Constantinople during an Arian régime. So Christianity came to the Goths in this heretical form, a circumstance later to have considerable importance for the subsequent course of European history.

From the standpoint of the political stability of the empire the Council of Nicea, instead of being the beginning of religious single-mindedness and social peace, was the beginning of a struggle that left the empire wearier and weaker than before. Popular violence and ecclesiastical intrigue together exhibited Christianity, just at the period immediately succeeding its moment of worldly triumph, in a manner likely to increase the contempt of the conservative Romans whose feelings, sympathies and habits clung to the institutions of the past, even more that smaller minority of intellectual superiors who might, with some justice because of the growing cult of the martyrs, look upon it as the worship of dead men, of whom the Galilean, as they called Jesus, had been the first. These latter felt more drawn to the less crass and popular speculations of Neoplatonic religion; for Neoplatonism, under Jamblichus who died about 330, had become largely an apology for theosophic speculation, divination, and the philosophically transformed polytheistic cults of paganism. Indeed Jamblichus was, except for the Christian objects of worship, extremely broad-minded, finding place in his system, not only for Greek and Oriental deities, but for others whom his fancy invented, all of which gods, according to a work ascribed to him, and certainly of his school, were suprarational (though Neoplantonic philosophers continued to reason about them) and, whether visible or invisible, were "established according to a common union and one energy . . . on account of which the same union of all divinities extends from on high, as far as to the end of the divine order." [9] So to all of the gods sacrifice should be made, to each appropriately, for "he who does not distribute to all these powers that which is adapted to them, and does not honor each in an appropriate manner, will depart imperfect, and destitute of the participation of the gods."[10]

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[9] Jamblichus, *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*, trans. from Greek by Thomas Taylor, 75.

We noted in a former chapter[11] that, according to Virgil, in the last century before our era, the birds did not foretell changes of the weather because they possessed wisdom from on high, but because their sense detected atmospheric changes to which our duller organs were insensible. The Neoplatonists of the fourth century were no such iconoclasts in matters of divination. For them it is

> divine and supernatural, and is supernally sent to us from the heavens . . . the whole authority of it pertains to the gods, and is imparted by them; it is also effected by divine works, or signs; and it possesses divine spectacles, and scientific theorems. All other things . . . are subjected as instruments to the gift of foreknowledge transmitted from the gods; *viz.* such things as pertain to our soul and body, and such as are in the nature of the universe, or are existent in particular natures.[12]

The religion of the Christians having failed to bring peace, unity, and renewed life to the sick and weary Empire, the conservatives and the theurgic literati were soon to be allowed a final attempt to infuse new life into it. In 361 the turn of circumstance brought to the imperial throne one of the disciples of Jamblichus, who possessed, not only the inspiration of Neoplatonism, but a true largeness of soul, and practical gifts, such as he shared with so many other Roman emperors even during the later centuries when their combined ability was unable to check the tide of dissolution.

Julian, a nephew of the great Constantine, and known to Christian history as Julian the Apostate, appears to have been a high-minded idealist, without the deep brooding seriousness of the former philosopher-emperor, Marcus Aurelius, but with certain ardors and susceptibilities which made him perhaps more attractive to those to whom he gave his friendship. As a general he proved himself, during his short career, competent, dashing and popular with the mass of his army. He entered upon his civic duties as emperor in the spirit of a reformer who was, as reformers are likely to be, enough of a zealot to further his ends not always frankly, the end justifying to him doubtless some of the means whereby he hoped to accomplish it.

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[10] *Ibid.*, 260-261.

[11] See Chapter II.

[12] Jamblichus, 112-113.

It was perhaps only his extreme youth which saved him from perishing in the general slaughter of Constantine's male relatives which immediately followed that emperor's death. For years after he lived practically a prisoner. Under the surveillance of the emperor, his cousin Constantius, his education had for a time been in the hands of a courtier bishop, who had been an equivocal signer of the Nicene Symbol. Christianity has been imposed upon him by an emperor who was attempting to crush both heresy and paganism by persecution. This same emperor was suspicious of every relative of his Father Constantine, and Julian might well have suspected that his Christian teachers were at the same time the emperor's spies. Even as Cæsar and general in Gaul he had felt it necessary to appear publicly as a Christian after he had given his heart to paganism and become an initiate to the Eleusinian mysteries.

He had indeed little reason to admire Christianity as he had often seen it. Both his uncle and cousin, Christian emperors, had been guilty of assassinations, Constantine's last days having been soiled even with the murder of his wife and son, and Constantius having made way with all the surviving near relatives of Constantine, with the exception of Julian, but six years old at the time, and his invalid brother, Gallus. Julian had also doubtless looked on cynically at the quarrels and intrigues of the Arian controversy. He himself used these divisions as one means of weakening Christianity, sending Athanasius back as Bishop to Alexandria,[18] and recalling from exile many adherents of the Nicene faith. As a part of his education he had read the Bible, and found in it many teachings inconsistent with Christian beliefs and practices prevalent. The cult of the martyrs offended him,

[18] A contemporary historian states this to have been a conscious policy.

leading him to say that the Christians had filled everything with graves and monuments.

On the other hand he had very early felt drawn to the pagan literature, reading the poets with his tutor the eunuch Mardonius. By stealth, and against express command, he had later, through the door of the rhetoricians, been introduced to Neoplatonism. Neoplatonism meant, as has been said, Jamblichus and his disciples, three of whom were at times instructors of Julian. "Scientific demonstration was a matter of small consequence with the most of these men; the practice of theurgical divination was better suited for their lofty intellects."[14] As their good disciple Julian sacrificed hecatombs at every altar, and practiced all sorts of divination. Though his mind was acute in criticism[15] his temperament was much rather that of the preacher than the philosopher. Indeed as such he never lost the neophyte's awe of his philosophic mentor. He was ever a little overproud of his familiarity with philosophers, an emperor among savants, a savant among emperors. His zeal for learning was doubtless sincere and ardent, but it was not without pedantry, and his correspondence paraded a quite unnecessary bulk of quotations from classic authors. A passionate lover of books he carried about a whole library when he traveled, but he remained to a large degree a dilettante given to rhetorical phrases. Indeed some of his contemporaries found him lacking in naturalness, and lacking too in poise, even with a manner jerky and spasmodic.

It is difficult to judge adequately one who died at the age of thirty-one, with brilliant achievements as a general behind him, but as a statesman little more than a vast and loftily conceived program which quite miscalculated the difficulties it was to meet. He had no appreciation of where the strength of Christianity lay, how deeply its roots had pushed, how its fiber had been strengthened by centuries of persecution, in spite of the surface indications of its court intrigues and the quarrels of its theologians and sectarian leaders. He was too much of an enthusiast ever to have questioned as a statesman the popular appeal of airy Neoplatonic sophistries, or to diagnose for practical political purposes the character of the remaining sympathy for paganism. In the palace gardens of Nicomedia, on the outskirts of Gaul, among a barbarian army, in the company of his philosopher friends were not the best places to do so. In the volatile East the tide was running against him. At Rome, as we shall see, the last stronghold of paganism, the dead weight of stubborn, weary conservatism would have irked him. The pagan senatorial class would have been as little interested in his Neoplatonic enthusiasm and his reforming zeal as were the Roman Christians in the subtleties of the Arian controversy.

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[14] Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy,* I, 254.

[15] In his lost work against Christianity, in part reconstructed from quotations found in Christian authors, he notes that the fact of Christ being the creator of the heavens and earth could be found only in John, and there not clearly; and that neither Paul nor any of the evangelists called Jesus God.

It is possible that time might have taught him to go more slowly, set more solid Roman legs beneath his too restless body. For Julian was at bottom a Roman (his uncle, Constantine, had never learned to speak good or fluent Greek), interested in social order and morals. As such, however, he had neither the reticence nor the dogged patience and composure which often won just by hanging on and saying little. He did have some of the Roman's conservative clinging to the past, and never, despite the self-conscious way in which he identified himself personally with Hellenism, that spontaneous adventurous confidence in ideas which lent brilliance to the Greeks. He seems to have been, like so many others, several emperors among them, a Roman who had drunk at the fountain of Hellenism to lose as well as to gain.

To laud him as an apostle of rationalism or intellectual freedom, fighting a last battle for enlightenment before the falling curtain of the Dark Ages should provide a dim stage, for the setting of the scenes of a drama of dogmatic intolerance and priest-dominated superstition is at all events little less than absurd. The old Hellas, its spirit and its philosophy, were long since dead. Julian had imbibed the pedantry, the sophistry, the superstition of what had come to take its place. Between Neoplatonism of the type of Jamblichus and classic Greece there was little in common except some quoted phrases of Plato's least rationalistic writings. One need sympathize neither with the major premises nor the logical method of medieval philosophy to find, in comparison with Jamblichus, almost any second-rate scholastic a clear-thinking rationalist.

One thing is certain, and that is the sincerity of Julian's hatred of Christianity, even when forced, against his will[16] to borrow from it in some of his attempted reforms. It is because of this hatred for Christianity, despite his lofty spirit and ability with which in a less hopeless situation and with a less ambitious program he might have shown himself an able administrator, that he is of most particular interest to history.

Julian's career as emperor may be briefly sketched. As the case with so many others, he was set upon the dangerous road of empire by the will of his army which, when they were to be called from his leadership to another part of the Empire, revolted and proclaimed him Augustus. Against his will, as he at least wrote to his cousin, the Emperor Constantius, he accepted, as the only means of avoiding being immediately slaughtered by them and having another set in his place. The answer of Constantius to this letter was to make preparations to attack this new Augustus. On the way, however, he suddenly died. Julian then proceeded to Constantinople where he was received with great enthusiasm.

Even before reaching Constantinople, as Julian enthusiastically writes to one of his philosopher friends,[17] paganism was introduced into his army, doubtless predominantly non-Christian. "We sacrifice bulls publicly; we have returned thanks to the Gods in many hecatombs. The Gods command me to purify everything, to the limit of my ability, and I obey them zealously."

So the pagan reaction was begun!

Nature went into mourning at this apostasy. While Julian and his army were still on the Illyrian frontier, "the vines appeared loaded with bunches of green grapes, though the time of vintage had passed, and that the Pleiades set. Also that there fell upon him, and upon his suite, a dew, each drop of which had the form of a cross."[18]

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[16] "The negligence of our priests with respect to the poor has suggested to the impious Galileans the idea of giving themselves to works of benevolence." *Letters* (Bude ed.), I, ii, 173.

[17] *Letters* (Bude ed.), "To Maximus," I, ii, 54.

In the edict providing for the reopening of the pagan temples Julian announced that he had no intention of disturbing other cults. He refrained from the use of force in persecuting Christians, but it is undeniable that he not only gave every preference to the followers of the pagan cults from the beginning; but the Christians, who had been favored, found themselves under the inconvenience of many disabilities. More and more the public offices were closed to them. Secular education was closed to Christian teachers, who were forbidden to exercise the callings of rhetoricians, grammarians or sophists, on the ground that they could not without injury interpret the classic authors upon whose works education was based, because of religious prejudice. "Homer, Hesiod, Thucydides, Isocrates and Lysias, did they not recognize the Gods as guides in all education?"[19] The command that whatever religious property had been confiscated from any cult whatsoever should be restored was enforced in a way particularly oppressive to the Christians. Indeed more and more, as he met difficulties, his temper toward the religion he despised and hated found opportunities to annoy and discriminate against them. Christians themselves, in the disorders which followed his administrative acts, gave pretexts for hostile acts.

The policy and temper of Julian in his relation to the Christians is well mirrored in a letter written toward the end of his reign. It avows a policy of toleration, displays with sarcasm his hatred of Christianity, and his realization of its departure from ideals of the founder. It shows too how quick was the emperor to avail himself of opportunities to exercise his displeasure against them, even, when financial difficulties had arisen, to despoil them as a means of supporting his army and refilling the imperial purse.

> I have used gentleness and humanity toward all the Galileans, that never anyone should be treated with violence, dragged to the temples, or

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[18] Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical,* V, i. [19] Julian, *Letter concerning Teachers,* 72.

> constrained by bad treatment to act contrary to his will. Despite this the Arian church, swollen with riches, has attacked the Valentinians (a gnostic sect) and committed excesses which never should occur in a well ordered city. Therefore, insomuch as the most admirable of laws bids them renounce their possessions, that thus they may more easily travel the road leading to the Kingdom of the Heavens, associating our own efforts with those of their saints, we command that all the property of the church of Edessa be taken from them, the money to be given to the soldiers, the lands added to our private domain, so that being in want they may be modest, and not be excluded from that celestial kingdom to which they always aspire. We advise the citizens of Edessa to abstain from all sedition and quarreling, lest they irritate our clemency and be therefore required to expiate such public disorders with the pains of fire and exile.[20]

The religious enthusiasms of Julian were by no means all directed negatively against the religion he attempted to supplant. He took up the office of emperor with the zeal of a moral reformer. In his personal life he was temperate to the point of austerity, and one of his first official acts was to cleanse the palace of numerous servants of luxury and ostentation. He kept always in close and intimate touch with his philosopher friends, and even showed a tendency, in his brief reign, to fill public offices with pedants and speculative theorists. He possessed no small amount of good Roman practical sagacity, but his impatient zeal, one suspects, would have led him to many hurried administrative steps which a longer reign would have shown unwise.

His positive attempts to reinstate paganism were in some ways, despite his own claim that he was in religion no lover of innovation,[21] such as to have brought about many reforms, some almost revolutionary, in the pagan religion he had embraced. Religion was not to be merely a means, by regular sacrifices publicly offered, of retaining the favorable auspices of the deities worshiped. It was to be a promoter of personal morals, of education, and of public and private benevolence. The mysteries, as well as Stoicism, had introduced theological and moral instruction as an element in the cult practices of religion. Christianity had made public preaching a part of the duty of its priesthood. In his ideal both were to have a place in his revived paganism. After the example of the Christians, he suggested the introduction of music into the ritualistic forms of worship. For the ancient paganism the priest was merely a functionary. His personal life, except in matters of ritual purity, lay aside from his duties in the cult. But the combined influence of the mysteries, the Gnostic sects, Christianity, had inculcated ideals of especial personal moral purity as appropriate to those who exercised priestly functions, and it was a part of the ideal of Julian that those who had in their charge the things of religion should lead lives of moral exemplitude.

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[20] "Letter to the People of Edessa," II, i, 196f.

[21] "I avoid innovation in everything, I may say, and especially in that which concerns the Gods," *Letters,* 153.

One matter, much before his mind in planning his religious reforms, he was forced more than once to recognize as a particular achievement of the hated Galileans. This, as has before been suggested, was the matter of organized public or communal care of the sick and the unfortunate.

We may bring to an end this brief summary of his religious policies with extracts from a letter to the High Priest of the province of Galatia:

> Finally, exhort the priests not to frequent the theater, not to drink in taverns, not to carry on a craft or occupation that is shameful or of ill-report.
>
> Establish in each city numerous hospices, that strangers may avail themselves of our philanthropy, not only our own people but any others who may have need of it. [After setting aside funds for philanthropic purposes he continues:] Of this dispense the fifth part among the poor employed in the service of the priests, then distribute the rest to strangers and beggars who appeal to us. It would be disgraceful, when the Jews have not a single beggar, when the impious Galileans, as well as their own nourish even our (poor), that ours should be seen to lack the assistance we owe them. Teach the friends of Hellenism to bear their part of such burdens; exhort the Hellenic villages to offer their first-fruits to the Gods. Accustom the Hellenes to such acts of benevolence. [Then, profiting perhaps by what he had seen of ecclesiastics mingled in court and official intrigue.] Visit but rarely the governors in their houses. . . . Let no priest go to meet them as they enter the town, but only when they have come within the temples of the Gods.[22]

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[22] "Letter to Arsacius," I, ii, 145-146.

As was natural, considering the inducements to conversion at the time of Constantine, and when later the edict of Constantius made sacrifice to pagan gods punishable by death, many Christians deserted the unpopular religion. However the temptation to do so was but short-lived, since Julian prepared in 363 an immense expedition against the Persians which he led in person, and, after a series of successes, he was killed, fighting without armor among the common soldiers. At his death this military expedition went to pieces, and, needless to say, with the accession of a new emperor, this time again a Christian, all of his reforms were laid aside. Jovian, elevated to the throne by his troops camped beyond the Tigris, in deference to the opinion of his predominantly non-Christian army, made no sudden breach with the policies of Julian. It was indeed not until after another twelve years that the pagans were again repressed, under the emperor Gratian, under whom the pagan title of Pontifex Maximus, up to then always assumed by the Roman Emperor, was allowed to lapse.

# XVIII

THE century following the Edict of Milan, in which Constantine granted toleration to the Christians, marks for the history of Christianity, even more clearly than for the general history of Europe, the coming to a close of the ancient world. During this century we can trace the slow downfall of the hopes of Pagandom, and also the growing necessity, on the parts of Christians, of reorientating their mundane expectations.

The fate of the old religion is most strikingly prefigured in the name given it, for the first time, in a law of the Emperor Valentinian in 368, which speaks of the religion of the country-folk, or peasants (*religio paginorum*); as a result of which we may to-day speak of the pagan religion.[1]

In the year 368 such a term represented rather the pious and prophetic hope of a Christian emperor than an actuality. Early in the fifth century, however, when it is found in the work of a Christian historian and a Christian poet,[2] it had become appropriate. In the years between, despite the failure of Julian, it was not without its well-born and eloquent advocates, and there was still before it a dramatic struggle in the city of Rome itself.

In fact the perceptible decline of political and social conditions, despite the fact that the Empire had been given over to the protection of the Christian God, its priests having been instructed by a council (381) to pray daily for the Emperor, gave a measure of new impetus to the unconverted, many of whom, we are told, put confidence in a prediction that Christianity was to last but three hundred and sixty-five years, which were expected to run out a little before 400.[3]

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[1] The word is of Latin origin, and occurs only in very late Greek authors, from a period long after the disappearance of the religions to which that name is given. See Socrates, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods.*

[2] Orosius and Prudentius. See Neander, *History,* II, 70.

[3] Augustine refers to this prediction in a letter, no. 100.

It is no longer possible to argue for the exclusive practice of paganism. The pagan apologists ask only toleration, for which they of course could, and did, cite Christian authority. Sometimes they asked for this on the grounds that religious faith could not be forced, again because the variety of human nature demanded a variety of religious belief and worship, and each should be left free to choose that which he best liked, as a private matter. As a matter of fact, however, the old religion had been, in fundamental principle, less a private matter than Christianity, nowhere better evidenced than in the fact that Christian emperors, until 375, continued to accept the title of *Pontifex Maximus,* and even later allowed themselves to be addressed as such. So Christian bishops might remind the Emperor that what he permitted became his act, and as such inconsistent with his Christian faith.

The general attitude of tolerance toward pagan religion which followed the brief reign of Julian did not long endure. The first persecutions were indeed on the ground of abuses practiced under its cover, and attempts were made to avoid violence. But with the slightest excuse there were usually zealots, often monks, who delighted at the opportunity of wielding an ax in the cause of God, with the result that in some outlying regions pagans and Christians amused themselves in pulling down one another's places of worship.

In 391 there came, both in the East and West, general edicts prohibiting pagan worship. This gave an opportunity to the Bishop of Alexandria to organize a crusade against the great Temple of Serapis, with the result than an open revolt and bloodshed followed. Even the Christians held back some moments in superstitious awe before the statue of the god, until one bolder than the rest smashed its face with an ax. Then, when lightning did not strike him dead, and the Nile did not burst its banks, the invaders quickly finished what he had begun.

Constantinople, having been founded under a monarch who first embraced Christianity, reserved its religious zeal for the party controversies of Christians. Here the Church, its dignitaries clustered close about the imperial throne, took more and more its color from the trappings of a still semidivine royalty.

> The liturgy was more and more modeled after the plan of court etiquette. Religious and civil ceremonies soon presented the same appearance, with the same rites, the same attitudes, the same gestures. . . . The Church became the palace of the Lord, more grandiose and magnificent even than the terrestrial palace (of the Emperor).[4]

So too the heavenly hierarchy of Christ, with the surrounding apostles, martyrs and saints, was pictured with the degrees of honor such as were marked in byzantine court ceremony; and just as in the palace the Empress too had her court, the Virgin set up her throne, surrounded by her particular martyrs and virgin saints, opposite that of her divine Son.[5]

So the Church in the East, like everything which approached the throne of these emperors, still able for a time with their money and prestige to keep back the recurrent waves of barbarian invasion, became more and more supine as an official body, while its intellectuals continued to speculate upon fine theological distinctions, giving largely to the West the task of sitting firmly upon and holding down decisions which had been arrived at because the East would not refrain from asking inconvenient doctrinal questions.

So Constantinople maintained its surface brilliance, in which the Church had its part. More melancholy was Rome, for centuries the center of European political power, now deserted, visited from time to time in passing, by that emperor who took his name from her, but had become so indifferent to her fate as to leave her at times almost without defenders. The Senate had been left little more than a municipal council, proud still, with a stubborn and tenacious hold upon the old traditions which intensified as the battle of paganism came to appear more and more hopeless.

Constantine, in his favoring of Christians, even his son Constantius, who had persecuted both pagans and heretics, had done little to disturb religious conditions in the city of Rome or the surrounding country. Constantine's edict against gladiatorial contests had never been enforced there, and in 384 a Christian emperor even sent captives to die in the Coliseum for the amusement of the Roman populace, being heartily thanked therefore by one of the most prominent senators, who further expressed the hope of seeing such spectacles often repeated. The intensity of the passion for these games is illustrated in a chapter of Augustine's *Confessions,* where he tells of a friend who had formed a loathing of their cruelty and scruples against witnessing them. When he went with friends, who had begged him to do so, he kept his eyes closed until the shouts of the crowd tempted him to open them. Then he was carried away by the same passion as they, crying out in encouragement, and carrying home a desire to return which made him no longer wait for invitation, but beg his friends to accompany him there.[6] In 403, when the Vandal Stilicho instituted gladiatorial contests in celebration of his triumph over the Goths in upper Italy, a Christian monk descended into the arena to protest, and was massacred for his zeal. Whether or not this incident was a cause, these were the last such contests in Rome.

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[4] Brehier, *L'Art Chétien,* 109. [5] *Ibid.,* 111.

The games, of which gladiatorial contests were not only the bloodiest, but perhaps because of this the most popular feature, were not only a form of amusement that elicited no revulsion in a high-minded senator, but they were linked with the memories and traditions of Rome's glory, and were also a part of their traditional manner of honoring the immortal gods who had the Eternal City in their keeping.

And these gods were still honored, not for themselves alone, but for all they had meant. To be sure the religious conceptions now surrounding them were quite different from those of earlier days, but the conservative worshipers chose not to look clearly at this fact. Moreover the old religion had no dogmas. The speculatively inclined, who had most likely drunk at the fountains of Neoplatonism, were free to interpret as they wished.

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[6] Augustine, *Confessions,* vi, chap. viii.

Indeed, to leisured aristocrats, many of whom had become more or less learned antiquaries, these religious ceremonies were more than anything else monuments to the departed glory of the past, which, they no longer having anything important to do, might be contemplated as shedding wan glory upon their illustrious family trees. Like good anglican high-churchmen they studied old rituals and antiquated treatises upon the gods. They made a pretense of keeping alive the religious significance of old feast days which retained among the populace about as much relation to religion as the Maypole in a European village in the nineteenth century.

These proud pagan aristocrats hated Christianity. At times they gave expression to their scorn of it. One of their poets cannot pass an island off the coast inhabited by a monastery of Christian monks without exclaiming how it sat mourning in squalor, full of men who fled the light.[7] But what almost more strikingly expressed the temper of scorn was the almost concerted silence they maintained with respect to Christianity and Christians. Their historians refrain from even mentioning the conversion of Constantine, and reading them one might imagine, says Boissier, that all the princes of the fourth century had been adherents of the old cults.[8]

As a crowning gesture of defiance they maintained, under the patronage of members of the most aristocratic families of Rome, a temple for the blood-bath of the Asiatic cult of the Mother-of-the-Gods, upon the Vatican hill, opposite the church erected by Constantine above the traditional tomb of St. Peter.

The first severe blow was struck at the pagan religion in Rome in 382, when the emperor Gratian, while not forbidding pagan worship, removed from it state support, by stripping the Vestal Virgins and other temples of the property from which their income was derived, and devoting money previously given for their support to other public purposes. These ceremonies retained indeed little save their quasi-monumental pomp, and pompous ceremony is expensive. Without their endowments even the august Vestal Virgins seem not long to have devoted themselves to the keeping alight of the ancient Hearth of Rome. There is an interesting story to the effect that the wife of the Vandal Stilicho took from the neck of a statue in the Temple of Vesta, toward the end of the fourth century, a handsome necklace, there being present to remonstrate but a single old woman, the sole survivor of the College of Vestals. Soon after people began to further vandalize the temple, stripping it of its ornaments and the marble lining of its walls.

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[7] "Squalit lucifugis insula plena viris" (Macrobius, as quoted by Boissier).

[8] Boissier, *La Fin du Paganism,* II, 209.

A still more insignificant episode appears to have caused even greater commotion. The same emperor ordered the removal of a statue of Victory from the Senate's hall of meeting. This statue, part of the artistic booty Rome had stolen in the late days of the Republic, when so many Greek works of art had been carried off by the Roman conquerors, had presided over the deliberations of the Senate for almost four centuries. The Senator Symmachus was sent to expostulate with the emperor at Milan. There Ambrose, the strongest, perhaps also the proudest of all the Christian bishops, and himself a Roman patrician of highest birth, argued the case against him.

The emperor was a weak man. However, under a stronger emperor, Theodosius, Ambrose had openly upheld the doctrine that the State was subordinate to the Church, and had suspended the emperor himself from the enjoyment of religious ministrations because he had forced Christians to restore a Jewish synogogue they had destroyed. He also successfully opposed the attempts of imperial influence to install an Arian congregation in a church at Milan, the populace supporting him, the army wavering in his direction. It is therefore not strange that this symbol of past pagan glories should have then disappeared from the senate chamber, despite all the eloquence Symmachus could muster.

The very strength of Ambrose however was perhaps one important reason for a later brief return of this statue and altar of Victory to its old place. When later, the occasion this time being an act of cruelty on the part of Theodosius, Ambrose finally humiliated him to the point of a year's voluntary penance, a short pagan reaction again took place, temple property was returned, and the image of Hercules replaced the Christian symbol upon the banners of a Roman army.

But the struggle between Christians and pagans was of less political importance than the divisions of Christians among themselves which had lived on in spite of the Nicene Council and its Creed. It is this sequel which best tells the story of how it happened that in five days a symbol of faith could be drawn which ultimately was signed by all but one of the delegates. As has been said, "It would be impossible to explain why the Oriental Church should strive so long against this Creed, if the adoption of it had been the result of unfettered discussion."[9] Why the imperial influence had favored the party of Athanasius is perhaps explained by the fact that Arius was in revolt against his bishop. At all events the external influence of the emperor formed a precedent, and as emperors were successively Athanasian or Arian, or perhaps only semi-Arian, the party considered by him to be orthodox, and that alone, received state recognition and support.

The situation was still further complicated by the fact that almost all the barbarian converts to Christianity were Arian, and weak emperors, shut up in Constantinople or Ravenna, rested for support upon a succession of barbarian prime ministers, who might, as in the case of Stilicho, be Arian while their master was Athanasian.

Since heresy had come to be recognized as a crime punishable by the state, Christians of whichever party allegiance were in a delicate situation.

From the standpoint of speculation, on the basis of Neoplatonism, which held the field alone as an organized system of thought, the Arian position was the more natural, or at least some sort of subordination of the Son to the Father. The Athanasian party indeed took refuge in a stubborn dogmatism, perceiving, perhaps with deep practical insight, that it was of importance to the worship of the Son, after all of the greater moment to Christianity then, that there be no question as to his divine dignity. At all events the West, not Rome only but the more completely Romanized parts of Gaul, became predominantly of the party of Athanasius, whereas, despite conspicuous monastic defenders of that opinion, the East was more given to some theory of subordination.

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[9] Neander, *History of Christian Dogma* (Eng. trans.), I, 290.

This controversy was but one form in which a breach between East and West was becoming more clearly defined. In the matter of language the two portions of the Empire were drifting apart. In the fourth century considerably fewer educated Romans knew Greek than two centuries earlier. Even Augustine, a most zealous scholar from youth, appears not to have read Greek with ease. At the same time the Hellenic portion of the Empire, always scornful of Latin, took less and less trouble to learn it.

This breach came to be defined when, at his death, Theodosius, in 395, bequeathed a divided empire to his two sons.

In the meantime various Germanic tribes, dislodged from their homes by an invasion of Mongolians from still farther east, overran the empire, drawing nearer and nearer, always more boldly, to the great centers of civilization. Stilicho, the chief both of state and army for Honorius (who had come to the throne at the age of eleven and had grown up pious, gentle, but incapable and obstinate), treated with them for a time, turning aside from Rome several tides of invasion. But Stilicho, himself an Arian, had been too tolerent in matters of religion, was thought to have humiliated the empire in treaties made with the invaders, was even believed to be plotting to gain both East and West as a united empire, for himself or his son. The emperor was appealed to. He was twenty-five. Was it not time he should himself take the reins of government? A counterplot was formed, Stilicho was murdered, and two years later the Visigoth Alaric entered, and for six days sacked the city of Rome, sparing only, because Alaric was a good Arian Christian, the churches and the apostolic antiquities which among the horrors of ruthless barbarian pillage were born in procession, to the sound of chanted psalms, to the shrine of Peter on the Vatican.

Except for the booty obtained from a city in which great riches of movable property were still heaped up or hidden, the capture of Rome was of little material importance. But the moral effect of the capture of the Eternal City, from the citadel of which the immortal gods had kept off the invader when centuries before attacking Gauls had burned the lower city, was tremendous. In some ways it was more disquieting to Christians than to pagans, since the latter might believe and say, "If the citizenry still offered sacrifices to the immortal gods this never would have happened." [10]

The majority of Christians, however, had long since ceased to look upon the empire as representing either an alien power or alien ideals. Rome, as the burial place of Peter and of Paul, was under particular Christian consecration. "The body of Saint Peter is at Rome, people murmured, the body of Saint Paul is at Rome, the body of Saint Lawrence lies at Rome, the bodies of so many other martyrs lie at Rome, yet Rome is miserable!" [11] Had Rome fallen a century earlier it would have been easier, with the historian Sozomen, to recognize its downfall as a divine punishment of the debauchery, injustice and violence of the Romans,[12] but now for a century the Christian God had been upon the side of Rome. Christian apologists had accepted the idea of the city's eternity, linking it with the new symbol upon the Vatican, where the body of Peter lay beneath the altar of a Christian shrine, the foundation of a Roman Emperor. The power of the Christian God was therefore in the balance to be weighed, and one wonders whether there were not many Christian voices raised in support of the suggestion of pagan senators during the siege, that public sacrifice be offered to the old gods, who for a thousand years had preserved the city. At all events we are told that the Bishop of Rome privately gave consent to the offering of such sacrifices.[13]

Despite the short duration of the barbarian occupation, this dramatic catastrophe shocked many Christians into a haunting fear that their religion was not saving the world to which its support had been lent. When a few years later an eclipse of the sun, followed by terrible drought, caused much suffering and many deaths, some of them, like Christians of earlier days when the Apocalypse had been written, began to read the Book of Daniel, that first religious philosophy of history, which measured the ages of the world and predicted its end. Others, early in the fifth century, turned more sympathetic attention toward the barbarians, hoping that the times might be mended by them. The majority doubtless merely murmured from time to time complaints against the providence of God, as the Roman power became steadily weaker, that of the barbarians more and more obviously ascendant. Someone wrote Augustine, suggesting that he write a book of consolation against the prevailing misfortunes of the time, to which he replied that for such calamities long groans were more appropriate than long books. A disciple of his, however, did undertake this task, writing a history in which he sought particularly to describe the calamities of the past, in order to convince his contemporaries that, since the victory of Christianity, the world had not been more unhappy than before.

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[10] So one pagan wrote, who is quoted by Augustine in a sermon.

[11] Quoted by De Labriolle, *Histoire de la littérature chrétienne latine,* 522.

[12] Sozomen, *op. cit.,* IX, vi.

[13] Moeller, *History of the Christian Church* (Eng. trans.), I, 309 note.

In this anxiety of Christians concerning the fate of the Roman world a change of attitude is marked, so fundamental as to deserve particular attention. At the very beginning of the third century, when Christians were daring first to ask openly for reasonable tolerance, Tertulliun—though elsewhere declaring that Christians respected the emperor and were bound, save in matters of conflict with their religion, to obey him—reminds them that they are foreigners in this world.

> Our citizenship, the Apostle says, is in heaven. You have your own registers, your own calendar; you have nothing to do with the joys of the world; nay you are called to the very opposite, for the world (meaning the Roman world) shall rejoice, but you shall mourn.[14]

The political state was, in theory, at the worst a temporary obstacle, at the best indifferent to the essential end of Christians. At its best it was therefore easily tolerable, but Christians might consistently expect of it nothing beyond the peacefulness of being left alone.

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[14] *De Corona,* chap. xiii.

The conversion of Constantine changed all this, but the change did not come in a moment. Eusebius and Lactantius, contemporary Christian historians, see in the conversion of Constantine, first of all, a vista of perpetual peace spread out before the Church. The latter bursts into a pæan of joy:

> Where are now the surnames of the Jovii and the Herculii? . . . The Lord has blotted them out and erased them from the earth. Let us therefore with exultation celebrate the triumphs of God, and oftentimes make mention of his victory; let us in our prayers, by night and by day, beseech him to confirm forever that peace which, after a warfare of ten years, he has bestowed upon his own.

But it did not take long for the administrators of the Church's interests to discover material axes, which might be ground while a Christian emperor turned the wheel of the grindstone. If Constantine might use Christianity, so too might the Church use him, and more easily princes after him. In the theological strife of parties, which next disturbed the peace of the Church, to gain the emperor was to gain a very large percentage of the battle. The State fought for the Church; what more easy to believe than that God should fight for the State? Indeed, a few more bishops like Ambrose of Milan might have convinced Christians that the institutions of the Roman state were a chosen instrument of God for the advancement of right thinking among Christians, holding back the armies of barbarian heretics and extinguishing those within the Roman pale. So might a tottering empire set Christian faith atremble with it, and so indeed it seems to have done.

Despite the pious hope of Christians that the Empire be spared to uphold the existing social system and further the interests of orthodox Christianity, the institutions of that empire were more fundamentally bound up with the passing pagan world than they

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[15] Lactantius, *On the Manner in which the Persecutors Died,* chap. lii.

ever could have become with Christianity. The charge of Gibbon, so often still repeated and argued, that Christianity destroyed the Roman Empire, is rather beside the point than either true or false. The fall of that empire after a slow decline testified rather to the tenacity with which institutions, strongly organized and competently administered, may outlive the impetus and ideals which gives them birth and sustains them until their organization and the mental attitude of obedience to and trust in them has been fully formed. It was upon the decline of confidence in the world-view of paganism that Christianity grew. A still vital and confident paganism never would have thrown in its lot with Christianity. However much individual Christians may have fed, during the entire first four centuries, upon the gospel germ of the new religion, as a continually growing institution Christianity fed upon the weakness of paganism. Converted pagans to a large extent shaped its growth almost from the beginning, and fled for refuge to it in larger and larger numbers as the old order of ideas and ideals seemed to crumble beneath their feet.

What remains of truth in Gibbon's contention is substantially this: that Christianity was fundamentally inconsistent with the confident and spontaneous impulse out of which grew the particular sort of beauty and strength exemplified in the masterpieces of ancient art and civilization. In the sphere of interaction between religion and ethics the epigram of Matthew Arnold points the contrast, *Socrates is terribly at ease in Zion.* Over against this epigram may be set the words of Jesus, "When you have done everything you have been charged to do say, We are but useless slaves; what we have done we were obligated to do."[16] The Greek took himself to be free in his own nature, with the grounds of moral obligation in his own reasoning intelligence. In principle, as Paul saw, the words of Jesus implied that the Christian was free in passing through the slavery of formulated ethical ideals to types of conduct and attitude which transcended them.

When passed on to the political sphere the ideal of the Greeks, and thus of the Romans who in the intellectual sphere were adapting borrowers always, meant a state which, in fulfilling its function ideally, would become stable and static. The Athenians, impatiently striving to create the ideal state, lived through a relatively short period of amazing political instability until conquered by a Rome which put stability first and created a remarkable system of law and political administration to insure it. So, for the Roman world, Eternity came to be Rome and the emperors who, in succession, wielded its sovereignty. But Eternity, for Christians, was Zion, a city in the heavens, whose citizens could rest here in no established city, since they were *slaves* save in so far as their aspirations rose above all formularies of law or social institution experience might organize.

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[16] Luke XVII. 10.

This, though they might not clearly see it, was implied throughout their religion, and makes it plain how unsubstantial was Christian hope which linked the eternal fortunes of the Church to the inviolability of the Eternal City. It was necessary that their minds and dispositions be prepared for conditions immediately before them. So felt a great genius who, in his episcopal city, was deeply troubled himself at the ill fortunes of Rome, but who, having turned his mind upon the question was capable, as are few men, to mold from his rich experience a thought product of unusual originality.

This man was Aurelius Augustinus, the great St. Augustine, born in 354 in a little village of the Roman province of Numidia (part of the modern Algeria) who, a little before the year 400, had returned to the region of his birth as Bishop of Hippo Regius, the modern Bona.

# XIX

THE principal elements of Augustine's character are rendered more striking if he is compared with Origen, the greatest of his predecessors among the Christian Doctors. Origen, despite the fact that he was given a name which means *born of Horus,* sprang from a pious Christian family in Alexandria, where he was born about 186. His father was beheaded for his faith. Origen, a precocious youth, became enamored both of philosophy and asceticism while a mere boy. The latter passion warred against the other to the extent of causing him at one time to renounce the study of all but sacred literature. Further than that it led him to put literally in practice a suggestion of Matthew's Gospel, that there were eunuchs who made themselves such for the sake of the kingdom of God.[1]

Appropriately to such zeal Origen minded from early youth the high things of God, fed upon books, "little creative in matters of philosophic principle"[2] and mainly adapting older pagan philosophies to his great scriptural learning. "Great was his industry, great his purity, patience, endurance,"[3] but the flame that was in him fed on parchment, and is written on paper for those who search theologies, curious allegories and other speculations which flee the mundane sphere. He himself, had it not been for persecutions and episcopal jealousies, might have lived a life as externally uneventful as that of a toiling German professor.

Not so Augustine. His fame is written in vital forms and forces of human history for centuries after him, and his thought is as vitally, and more richly knit to the surging experiences of a full and vigorous life, as is that of Paul. It is significant that the richness of his thought, the adumbration of his most vital ideas, wells up and flows in long interruptions, between the events of his own personal spiritual experience, as recounted in his autobiography, the *Confessions;* nor less so that the first nine books of these *Confessions* should, as he tells us, concern himself, and the last three treat of the Book of Genesis, from the passage "God made heaven and earth," to the passage, "God rested."

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[1] Matthew XIX. xii.

[2] Ritter, *Histoire de la Philosophie Chrétienne* (or in German original or English trans.), I, 427.

[3] Vincent of Lerins, *Against Heresies,* chap. xxiii.

Though an eager devourer of books, from the time when he wept over the death of Dido[4] and learned from the comedies of Terence the meaning of the words *gremium* and *fucus,*[5] the impetuous flow of impulses, imaginations, affections within him drank rivulets and torrents from all sides. However he might chastise his early sins, sitting down at forty-seven to write his *Confessions,* one does not feel either that he gloats or sorrows unhealthily about them. Indeed, when he writes, "Behold, my one-time infancy is dead, and I live; while you, O Lord, not only live always but nothing dies in you,"[6] one seems to feel a certain regret for the lost vigor of youth; and when he tells how, while as a boy he was dangerously ill, his Christian mother hesitated to have him baptized, lest he recover, and subsequent sinning be more dangerous to his eternal welfare by reason of his baptism, he ends by asking whether it were for his ultimate good that he was then left *reins loose for sinning.*[7]

In fact the attitude of Augustine toward the sinfulness of the bodily instincts, when one sets it over against the ascetic movement of the time, remembers that he was a monk and that as a Christian he was convinced of the congenital sinfulness of man, is as remarkable as many other elements of his thought. He goes back to his early infancy, searching in observations made of other infants, early tendencies to evil. He sees instinctive selfishness in the anger of a baby who sees another at the breasts of his nurse, and still praises God for implanting an instinct which employs every force of the organism to conserve its *wholeness* and *soundness.*[8] In the midst of a chapter which confesses youthful amorous irregularities he again remembers that the Lord did

[4] I, xiii. [5] I, xvi. [6] I, vi. [7] I, xi. [8] I, vii.

not disdain to form the body *fine procreandorum liberorum,*[9] and in confessing his infatuation for the Manichæan cult he writes, "More trustworthy are the phantasies of the body than theirs."[10]

And it is doubtless a mistake to assume that Augustine, in his youth, employed his senses in the search of amorous adventure even to the extent which one might assume by concentrating attention upon a few passages. He confesses at almost equal length an expedition in which he, with some other youths, stole some pears, not from desire to eat the pears, which were after all but very ordinary pears, better than which he might easily have had for the asking, but because of some strange perversity in human instinct. "Alas such rottenness! what monstrosity of life! what abyss of death! Could I have desired what was unlawful for no other reason than because it was unlawful?"[11] It is fair to assume that other youthful excesses were repented with equally exaggerated fervor.

As a matter of fact the senses of Augustine, not less than his mind, were everywhere alive: at the theater, at the games of the circus, watching the infant antics of a well-loved son, whose mother was sent away, having upon him only the claims of a mistress, when at one time he thought of arranging a marriage,[12] listening to the flow of water into the bath while lying awake at night, speculating as to the cause of the irregularity of its flow and thence initiating a discussion of the *order* of the universe.[13] And when later, as a Christian, he wrote hymns in praise of Paradise, he does not sing of a blinding light of contemplation, hushed to silence by the vision's mystic consummation:

> A questo voce l'infiammato giro
> si quieto con esso il dolce mischio,
> che si facca del suon del trino spiro.[14]

He sees in Paradise joys and flowers, health and love and song, and beneath the "machine of revolving worlds; the sun, the globular stars with the planets."[15]

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[9] II, ii. [10] II, vi. [11] II, vi. [12] VI, xv.

[13] *De Ordine,* chap. iii. [14] Dante, *Paradiso,* Canto xxv, 130.

[15] "De gaudeis Paradisi" (two hymns found in March, *Latin Hymns*).

There is a chapter toward the end of *The City of God,* a work as to which we shall have more to say, entitled, "Of the good things with which God has filled even this unfortunate life of condemnation." It exemplifies, in title and content, how this world of mixed good and evil, though life forced him to look above it for peace, and theology taught him to condemn it, interested him always; and as for the *body,* which in man's first blessing of fruitfulness brought his curse, "its seeds unfold their parts, and from their hidden and invisible wrappings unroll the visible forms of beauty which we see," and mark it, though mortal like that of the beasts, and weaker than the bodies of some of them, as a fitting servant of a rational soul; and not merely an instrument to use but a thing to look upon for its beauty, since some of its parts are manifestly made for beauty and not for use: men's beards for example which are not for protection but for a *virile ornament.*

How large too is the capacity of man! With what cunning do ingenious philosophers and heretics defend even their errors and falsities!

And what beauty in the universe! No discourse could complete its praise. What beauty in the heavens, the earth, and the many-mooded sea; in the obscurities of the woods, in the color and perfume of flowers, in the variety and profusion of garrulous songbirds, in the labor of ants and bees![16]

The exuberance of Augustine impresses one almost everywhere. Around any thought which comes to him collect immediately a throng of images, crowd about it, wait impatiently at his pen point to be set down in order. A few great literary geniuses, and very few, possess this quality. One thinks immediately of Rabelais. Paul too possessed it in a measure, but the thoughts which could gather about them such profusion of suggestion were fewer and within a narrower range of personal experience.

Still one can hardly think of Augustine without being led to glance here and there at the converted Jew whose heart Augustine read as no Christian seems to have read it before him. Different as were the two men in life and in character, greatly as Paul influenced the course of early Christian thought, none before Augustine seems to have plunged deep to the point from which sprung the whole structure of Paul's ideas and drunk from the fountainhead, though by no means following everywhere the stream, as it surged and meandered.

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[16] *De Civitate Dei,* XXII, xxiv, *passim.*

Augustine, despite the prayers of a pious mother, of whom the Western Church has made St. Monica, was not fully a Christian until his thirty-third year. He too kicked against the pricks of a conscience dissatisfied with the life he led. And they were alike in this also, that no idea could enter either of them without something happening to it through its linkage to the surge and turmoil of personal experience. They are unlike in this consequence of their difference in temperament and early life, that while Paul found in his conversion a great liberation of energy, a tremendous broadening of sympathy and activity, Augustine found tranquillity in pruning his impulses and centering them in his religious life. Paul's neurotic self-analysis having changed its character, when once he had been able to shift its center to the Lord Jesus Christ (in him, yet beyond and outside of him), found his exuberance of life in having been freed. It angered him that anyone should attempt to curtail for Christians this freedom he had gained, and he pleads in an impassioned way to safeguard for others what had been his salvation.

> For *freedom* Christ freed us; stand firm then, lest again you be hitched beneath a yoke of slavery.[17] . . . Make test of everything, hold fast the good.[18] (Having choice here of two words translatable *good,* he uses one which might also mean beautiful. The test is to be, not by rule but by personal reaction.) . . . All things are allowable, but not all are fitted to our ends; all things are allowable, but all do not build (for us).[19] . . . I have become all things to all men, that in every sort of way I might save some.[20]

Augustine could feel all this. He had put many things to the test, and life had shown him the good in ways and places where he had by no means gone seeking it in the sense Paul meant, but seeking only the stilling in action of some natural impulse in its fulfillment. He turned to Paul and made him the principal literary companion of his earliest Christian life. But he sought another thing than had Paul. Liberty he already knew; what he sought was peace, the drawing together and ordering of impulses which brought pain, dissatisfaction, mingled with the joy or pleasure toward which they aimed. What might be called the theme of his *Confessions* expresses this, in a sentence found near the beginning of that work: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee."[21]

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[17] Galatians V. 1.

[18] I Thessalonians V. 21. The word translated *good* is here *kalos,* the different word he might have used *agathos.*

[19] I Corinthians X. 23.

[20] *Ibid.,* IX. 19-22.

Augustine is not, any more than Paul, a systematic thinker, despite the fact that he left us treatises, Paul only letters. Many of his ideas and theories are thrown off in the heat and hurry of controversy as more and more he was turned to as the champion of orthodoxy. He uses dialectic to be sure, and as Paul before him, often as a special pleader; but it is not so much logic which gives consistency to his thought as the deep necessities of his nature finally drawn together in that conception of life which made of it a pilgrimage toward the lasting joys of the *City of God*.

Augustine was a Roman, and in the early years of the fifth century, before the Visigoth invasion, the Roman provinces of Africa were perhaps more Roman than Italy itself. In spite of the very personal basis of his thought, the warmth of his human affections, the richness of his psychological observation (for in this last he was far ahead of his time) the variety of human individuality had not impressed itself upon him in such a way as to affect his social conceptions. Paul is always conscious of differences in endowment, in function, in innate motor impulse.[22] Of his own *salvation* he speaks as "laying hold on that in him for the sake of which he had been laid hold on," at his conversion.[23] So his social vision is more complicated and more modern than that of Augustine. The conception of Augustine, however, made him a

[21] *Confessions,* I, 1.

[22] I Corinthians XII. 4-31.

[23] Philippians III. 12.

fitter servant of the more immediate future. It submerged his individuality in the common end of all Christians. Since the living Christians were organized as a Church, it made him the unquestioning adherent and defender of that Church. Since there was, within the Church, an institution which sought more single-mindedly to still the noises of the world by separating from it, it made him a monk.

So the influence of Paul, awakened for a little time in his greatest convert, fell asleep again until the Protestant Reformation, and Augustine became, not only that one of the Church Fathers in whom the Roman period was summed up, but the father of the medieval Church.

How, precisely, did Augustine sum up the period in which Christianity developed through its association with the thought and institutions of the ancient world?

His education and intellectual influences were well into manhood pagan. Thence he inherited the two problems which had emerged from the disillusion which followed upon the heels of some years of inspiring confidence in the intellectual powers of mankind; how can we attain and maintain happiness, and how can we arrive at certainty when we think?

These two problems had been first put together, and then in a sense put aside, by the conclusion that the attainment of happiness and certainty were both interfered with by the contamination of matter. If you were an intellectual you had to *think above matter* to be either happy or sure; and if you were too impatient for such discipline you must in some less self-conscious way, at least for a few moments and from time to time, still the cravings and impressions of the senses and listen to some oracle.

This solution of these two problems was scarcely less Christian than pagan. Christian and pagan philosophers both had contributed to the enrichment of speculation that came at bottom to this conclusion. As the mass of Christians and pagans came closer and closer together about the only matter in which the bulk of them differed was in the *oracles* to which they listened, and the ceremony through which these were approached. If the Fathers of the Church had been robbed of the task of defining the oracles of God, and the task of pointing the excellence of ridding oneself of sensual contamination there would have been left them little to talk about.

In short, life had been robbed, both by pagan and Christian thought, of any positive constructive significance. The workaday world went on, of course, with the essential joys and sorrows, wearinesses and diversions that surround life under any conditions, but the very persons who might have been looked to as directors of its energies toward any social ends had either lost all enthusiasm or spent such as they possessed in an intellectual cultivation which was socially sterile. It was not so much moral corruption from which the world suffered, says one of the great modern historians, as a general fatty degeneration of will, and enervation of character.[24] In Rome the patricians were very busy about petty social amenities, everyone everywhere was dodging taxes and political duties, the government was in the hands of bureaucrats, economic life was hardening into castes which the law attempted to hold to the labor of the class in which they were born.

In the midst of this situation the Church was, by the time of Augustine, probably more broadly and competently organized than the Empire itself. Bishops, even the Metropolitans, corresponding to the archbishops of to-day in the Roman Church, were elected by the people, at times only after differences of popular opinion resulting in bloodshed. The divisions of jurisdiction were borrowed from those of Roman administration. The Church dignitaries kept in close contact, bishops had their councils of priests, Metropolitans their councils of bishops. Larger and smaller jurisdictions held more and more often assemblies for the decision of matters which arose. In the West the authority of the Bishop of Rome was steadily increasing.

A bishop was about the busiest man of his time, and might, if he were an Ambrose, exercise an influence which an emperor who was by no means a puppet hardly dared to challenge. While the State, even though resorting to all sorts of expediences of taxation, and spoliation where the opportunity arose, was never able to meet its expenses, the Church was already steadily accumulating property. The sphere of the state's effective administration continually contracted; on the contrary, Church administration spread always farther and more effectively.

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[24] Fustel de Coulanges, quoted by Lot, *Fin du Monde Antique et le Début du Moyen Age,* 209.

At the same time the rank and file of Church membership was composed of just those average citizens of the empire, who gave to the times their social complexion; living from hand to mouth with little energy of hope or will, bargaining by bribes and tips with corrupt officials, fearing the barbarians, and themselves in morals more corrupt, says Salvian, than the barbarians they feared.[25]

Monasticism, which claimed to be a way of perfection, a higher road to eternal life, fed more largely upon the ennui and despair of the period than anything else. The *religious* (already in the fifth century the monks were the religious and other Christians *sæculares*)[26] fled the world much as did many a thin-skinned patrician to his country estates; fled too the barbarian, many monastic communities installing themselves upon little islands along the Mediterranean shores of France and Italy, where waves of barbarian invasion might pass, innocuous to them, along the shore. In them men and women escaped the responsibilities and disappointments of family and civil life,[27] the bearing of children whom God might fail to bless by letting them die in infancy and thus escape a life of sin.[28]

Flee, so far as possible, your body and the world, if you wish to gain happiness and wisdom. If this be too severe a discipline take the burden of your insoluble difficulties to some soothsayer, some thaumaturge, or to the tomb of some wonder-working martyr, and see what happens. Against the disheartening situation neither pagan nor Christian philosopher suggested a better remedy than this.

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[25] *De Gubernatione Dei,* IV, lxi.

[26] The word which we use, *secular,* derives its primary meaning from ideas of this time. At first it was used by Christian writers to denote the pagans, but comes to apply to ordinary Christians, devoted to their own *age,* not to the heavenly age to come.

[27] See Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity.*

[28] Same author, *On Infant's Early Death.*

Augustine passed through all these conditions, tried out the theories with which they were being met. He sought with Christianity's most popular rival, the Manichæans, to set the burden of the struggle between good and evil upon the shoulders of the gods. He tried, with the rosy-visioned opportunist, Cicero, to find in the search after knowledge an agreeable pastime whether or not one arrived at valid conclusions. He accepted from Plato the theory that thought is based, not upon experience but upon supersensible categories,[29] and from the best of the Neoplatonists, Plotinus, the belief that thought rested ultimately upon illumination.[30] He chose to be a monk, and accepted episcopal responsibilities as a duty from which he shrank, thinking "how many and great were the perils which would overhang his life in the business of directing and governing the Church."[31] Without fundamental change of principle he placed the *revealed word of God* as the source of illumination and the fundament of knowledge, and the person of Jesus as *mediator* where Neoplatonism had put a hierarchy of subsidiary deities. So he might seem to have gone no farther than other of his Christian predecessors, who had adapted pagan thought to Christianity; and so he might be said to have summed up the period of interaction between pagan and Christian thought.

But his thought went farther than these accepted principles. He restated the problem of evil in terms which made human life the *true* mediator of salvation. He looked for another basis of knowledge outside of the revelation of the Scriptures, and found it in *himself:* his own unshakable conviction of his own existence.[32]

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[29] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei,* VIII, vii.

[30] *Ibid.,* X, ii.

[31] Posidonius, *De Vita et Moribus Augustini,* chap. iv.

[32] Chaps. vii-viii of *De Libero Arbitrio* are an interesting discussion bearing upon this. For other passages, see Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy,* I, 330.

This is not the place to consider how the implications of this conception as to the basis of a logical structure of reliable thought leaps over early medieval scholasticism, and links him with the beginnings of the dissolution of the scholastic system, with Descartes, and with the philosophy which we call modern. But the *Confessions* of Augustine has been, from the time it was written, one of the world's popular books. It was read as widely as any other book before Scholasticism was born, and it is important for the ages to follow that he deigned to attend, as a philosopher, to the things which went on within the human psyche, and to link these things in a constructive way with the process of truth-seeking, instead of in theory emptying human nature of all these psychological happenings in its search for wisdom and certainty. The Middle Ages formed, as we shall have occasion to note, a thought structure based upon dialectic, not upon experience, but the Middle Ages were also richly aware of human psychology, and how much this interest owed to Augustine would be difficult to measure. If the Scholastics of the Middle Ages left Augustine to one side, the medieval mystics paid more attention to his psychology,[88] even though they might not properly claim him as one of them.

If Augustine's contribution to the problem of how one might find a substantial basis for his thought was a tendency deriving from his temperament and his experience that led him to attend to what went on within him, rather than a generating principle of his systematic philosophizing, his restatement of the problem of evil was a clear and definite reorientation of the entire problem, and remained—perhaps may still be said to remain—the Christian solution of that problem.

Augustine denied, against pagan thought generally, that evil had its origin in matter. God had created matter as well as everything else, hence it could not be essentially evil. He denied, particularly against Plotinus, that evil was something men carried over into their present life from some preëxistence upon a lower spiritual plane. He denied, against the Manichæans, that evil was god-created, either of the Christian God or any Satanic being who warred against him. The impulses even of the good and bad angels did not differ as sprung from a diversity of principle or source, but were projected from their own wills and desires.[84]

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[88] For Augustine's influence in Middle Ages, Nourisson, *La Philosophie de Saint Augustin,* II, chap. cliii f.

Evil had sprung, according to Augustine, from the freedom of the will, a knotty question into which we shall not here enter, despite his long controversy with the Pelagians centering about this problem. The essential thing for us is that for Augustine good and evil were values which had their basis in the motive power behind experience, and the drama of their struggle took place in the mundane sphere of human life. In principle then one should not deny the flesh but discipline it; one did not flee life but find through it the highest values and prune away the excrement. So Augustine, though a monk, was never an ascetic. Though he might fear lest, in eating and drinking, he might be too generous with his appetite, what he sought was to hold, as he says, "the reins of his gullet" at moderate tension between indulgence and such abstention as weakened his powers of thought and action.[85]

So Augustine broke with those who charged their sins and ignorances against the body. It was, he says of himself, as a *fleshly, wandering soul* not yet turned back upon the way that led to peace that he had joined them in *accusing his flesh.*[86] If his senses brought him evil they also brought him good. If they brought him error they also brought him truth, and even when they deceived him the affections of the soul served to prove to him its existence. Though perfection in knowledge and action, enduring peace, were attainable only in the existence he expected after death, the seeds of both were planted in himself. His body was a useful instrument, his memory a "capacious palace" into which the senses had ushered treasures of innumerable images of things of all sorts,[37] which images it not only stored in prodigious quantity, but in strange ways it affected them, so that when afterwards remembered something of their quality might be found changed.[38] So was all life affection, action and judgment. In attaining salvation man did not wait passively, nor kill the senses which might signify to him even the invisible things of God,[39] nor jump in thought from sphere to sphere through empty atmosphere; he lived, and one feels sure that Augustine found life always full and interesting.

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[84] *De Civitate Dei,* XII, ii.

[85] *Confessions,* X, xxxi.

[86] *Ibid.,* IV, xv.

[87] *Ibid.,* X, viii.

There was in life, however, a great cleft. From the beginning human nature, divided into two types, had proceeded toward diverse ends. One of these types, as he says, lives *secundum hominem,* the other *secundum deum.* The expressions cannot be exactly translated without paraphrase. The significance of the differentiation is that it may be perceived, not clearly in the static condition of a man at a given moment, but rather in the dynamics of his action. Men differ in the direction in which they are moving; one class lives *following* (the ends of) *man,* the other *following* (the purpose of) *God.* These two types taken together as two classes may be *mystically* called two cities or societies of men, one of which is "predestined to reign in eternity with God, the other to suffer eternal punishment with the Devil." [40] Augustine calls these two communities the Terrestrial City, and the City of God.

In this conception lay the germ of the work which Augustine began early in the fifth century to prove to Christians that there was valid reason to live and to hope, not with regard to a future life only, but midst the fears and dangers which beset them in the life which surrounded them; and to which he gave the title, *Concerning the City of God.*

To be sure Augustine's conception of the City of God contains one fundamental confusion. It is at one time a *mystic* community of persons snatched by divine grace from a worldly life into the way that leads to peace, at another it is just the Church, the

[38] *Confessions,* X, xiii-xvi.
[39] Augustine quotes Paul to that effect (Romans, I. 20).
[40] *De Civitate Dei,* XV, i.

organized body of orthodox Christians. But after all Augustine was not a mystic, and there is little doubt as to the direction in which his thought on this point preponderated. There is even less doubt as to the sense in which the immediate future was to construe his theory. His conception definitely put the organized Church into the processes of European history, and it did so precisely at the time when all other political and social institutions had been overtaken by the first tidal waves of dissolution.

The Christian community had always been, in theory, a reservoir of refuge from the sinful world; a company of *foreigners* in the midst of the political state, whose real citizenship was in heaven. That the state should become Christian in name, by the conversion of its ruler, was not thought of at first, and the confusion in Christian minds when it became so was excusable. Augustine reminds them again of this fact, and at a socially opportune moment, when without a stable institution of civilized society it is difficult to imagine what might have become of the cultural achievements of the past.

It is true that in a sense Augustine did not give to the centuries to follow the conception of a *city,* or state, as we should say to-day, which was any more than the pagan political community a living organism. Just as the institutions of civilized secular society, in the pagan idea, were in theory and ideal unchangeable, so the City of God was itself founded upon an unchangeable revealed body of faith. It was the citizens, not the city, who were upon an earthly pilgrimage toward the surcease of restlessness they might expect in heaven. But the Christian was given an earthly citizenship, in an institution for the sake of which the world had been created, and which was destined, in Augustine's thought, to endure until the destined number of the elect had been gathered together, after which the world would no longer have reason to exist. Sustained in its time daily by a continual act of creation, since it existed always only through God's continual supporting will, the world would then pass into nothingness as no longer connected with the divine purpose.

So the Church became, in theory, the world's only substantial social institution. States, civilization, might beat themselves to pieces against its walls or round about them; all that was real or durable in them would before have entered at its gates.

The facts of history, through almost half a score of subsequent centuries, in remarkable measure fitted themselves to this theory. Who can say to what extent the theory influenced them?

# BOOK IV

# THE DARK AGES

# XX

By the time that Constantine recognized Christianity it had in a measure spread broadcast wherever the Roman peace allowed easy communication, though Christian accounts of its spread are doubtless exaggerated. Its progress followed largely the Roman roads, and there is little to lead one to believe that it spread far from the larger centers of population except in the more thoroughly Romanized portions of the Empire. Even in central Gaul, as we shall see, temples, shrines, and sacred places of older Celtic religion were common in the fifth century.

In some directions it had even spread beyond the borders of the Empire, into Persia, India, Arabia, along the northern borders of the Black Sea.

Wherever Greeks or Romans had gone, tempted by trade, there was always the probability of its penetrating. Such penetration did not however imply the conversion of the indigenous people, but often meant a small community composed largely of such Greeks or Romans, with some few native converts. Later, in the fifth century, came conversion of another sort, when several Germanic peoples adopted the Arian form of Christianity. For such conversions it was necessary only to convert the tribal chief, his people adopting as a matter of course the religion of his choice.

Even earlier there had been a penetration of this latter type into Abyssinia, which was a convenient ground of missionary labor for Egyptian monks, though the beginning seems rather to have been due to an enterprising merchant who, being shipwrecked in the Red Sea, died in his attempt to visit the country. Two youths who accompanied him survived, however, and were captured along the coast and taken to the court of the Ethiopian king as slaves. Later set free by the king they gained influence particularly with his queen, held out the hope of commercial advantages, attracted some traders, converted the successor of the king who had freed them from slavery, and one of the two youths eventually was ordained Bishop by Athanasius, while the latter was still alive and Bishop of Alexandria.

But as we are following the Story of Christianity in Europe, and more particularly in Western Europe, the continuity of our story is more closely connected with the conversion of Gaul. Here indeed it is sufficiently difficult to trace the steps of its spread, but since, from the fifth to the ninth centuries the country which is now France was to be the principal battleground of civilization it is worth some pains to trace its progress and history, beginning with the conditions which preceded even the Roman conquest of Gaul.

The conditions in Gaul preceding the Roman conquest are still shrouded in much mystery.[1] All that we may learn from Greek and Latin sources as to a certain restlessness and instability of character, talkativeness, imitativeness and yet slowness to learn by experience, their curiosity about and general friendliness to the chance foreigner who came among them, shows an impressionable people, such as indeed are the French of to-day, responsive to praise, inclined to boasting, inclined to forget the disagreeable facts of life, even the injuries they have suffered; all this, particularly when one thinks of the French of to-day, still leaves unexplained the rapidity with which Roman civilization was adopted,[2] the comparative ease with which their indigenous customs and habits appear to have slipped from them.

The explanation doubtless rests to a large measure in the social-political situation of Gaul in the century preceding the present era, supplemented by a racial difference between the Celtic and Ligurian elements of the Gallic population which had become politically important. An older situation, in which a Celtic aristocracy had governed and exploited the country seems to have fallen into decadent instability. Here and there ambitious persons strove for power, calling upon the populace for support against the aristocrats with their numerous clients and dependents. This populace, a large part of them peasants, probably of Ligurian predominance, and if so the most tenaciously and narrowly conservative element, thus became a revolutionary element, with consequent accentuation of whatever factor of instability existed by reason of Celtic characteristics.

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[1] The four thousand pages of Camille Jullian's *Histoire de la Gaule* leaves still a sense of insufficiency of material upon which to base conclusions.

[2] See pages 8-9, Lanson, *Histoire de 'la Littérature Français* for a remarkable summary of French character.

Whatever be the explanation, it is evident that when Cæsar entered Gaul with his army the people were ready to try what a change in the political atmosphere might do.

Despite the fact that religion is often one of the conservative elements of a social complex, it would also appear that the Gauls were receptive to new religious allegiance; explained perhaps by the fact that the Druids, who doubtless did not represent all the present religious strata but particularly those which were of politically binding influence, had themselves been "in politics" to the extent of connecting their influence with one, and more probably the aristocratic element. So here again, whatever be the explanation, the Druid influence seems to have quickly waned under Roman domination, and the Gallic deities were rapidly assimilated to those of the Greco-Roman polytheism, while the religiously binding force of the Druids was for a time effectively superseded by the cult of the Roman emperor.

The cult of the emperor was organized in Gaul as nowhere else. In the year 12 A.D. a diet or assembly of the three Gauls was instituted, the delegates to meet each year at Lyons. Sixty cities sent their delegates, and the presiding officer of this assembly was the priest of the imperial cult. The first man to hold this office was himself a Gaul; the sacred rites were performed in the name of Gaul. Meanwhile Augustus prescribed the religion of the Druids, probably, as in the case of Christianity, because of its political significance. Claudius, emperor from 41 to 54 A.D., decreed its abolition. This decree amounted in effect, probably, to little more than the abolition of an official priestly caste and the assimilation of the principal Gallic gods to those of the

Romans. Rome reorganized the official religion of the cities, each of which had had its Druid priests and subsidiaries, by instituting in each city a high priest and other subsidiary priests to conduct the public sacrifices and superintend religious affairs. The gods of the country people, however, belonged to the vegetative cycle of religious practice, and these there is no reason to believe the Romans aimed to abolish. In a measure they too became assimilated to the Roman mythology, but in conspicuous cases, such as the god of the fountain of Nîmes, there was never any assimilation or attempt to change the name of the worshiped deity.

In the matter of the Gallic religion, therefore, the policy of Rome appears to have been briefly this: they rooted out so far as possible all those aspects of the indigenous religion as were of political influence, encouraged the process of assimilation in the matter of gods and vegetation spirits generally, and left undisturbed cult practices which could scarcely be of political or broadly social influence.

As to the beginnings of Christianity in Gaul, legend presents us with a distinguished company of missionaries, who were supposed to have brought the Gospel to Paris and to Provence in the first Christian century; just at the time when Rome was busiest in rooting out the troublesome elements of pre-Roman religion there and organizing its own political cult.

The missionary to Paris was reported by legend to have been no less a person than Dionysius the Areopagite, mentioned in connection with Paul, who is said to have converted him at the time he preached his sermon on the Hill of the Areopagus at Athens.[3]

But the missionary company which came to the south of France was still more impressive.

> After the ascension of the Lord, that is to say fourteen years after the Crucifixion, the Jews having long since massacred St. Stephen, and having driven the other disciples from their country, these last withdrew into the countries inhabited by the Gentiles to scatter there the seeds of the word of God. There was at that time with the apostles St. Maximim, one

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[3] Acts XVII. 34.

of the seventy-two disciples, to whom St. Peter had particularly commended Mary Magdalene. At their dispersion St. Maximin, Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, her brother, Martha her sister, Martilla the servant of Martha, and finally the Blessed Cedonius, the man blind from his birth whom the Lord had cured, were put together into a vessel, together with a number of other Christians, and abandoned to the sea without a pilot, in order that they might all be swallowed up together. God provided that they should come to shore at Marseilles.[4]

One is however not required to believe either of these stories. Dionysius the Areopagite appears to have been so popular as a bishop that three different sees claim him, Athens, Arles and Paris. In addition he was credited with having written treatises upon the heavenly and earthly hierarchies in which he made use of the writings of a fifth-century Neoplatonic philosopher,[5] representing not only a very active, but also a remarkably prophetic career. As for Voragine's account of the landing at Marseilles, the tale has, as many others of Voragine, enough to commend it not to require that it be historically true.[6]

As a matter of fact we are told by a chronicle written at the end of the fourth century that the Gospel came rather late to Gaul, and that there were no martyrs previous to the time of Marcus Aurelius,[7] and it is obvious that Christianity would not have been allowed to show itself in Gaul during the period when Rome was actively engaged in using its official cult as a religious bond between Gaul and its new masters. That there were no earlier tales of martyrdom in Gaul is the best possible proof that Christianity could not have come actively into Gaul before the third or even the last quarter of the second century, since, during the first century or more of Christianity the Christian writers found no events so worthy of comment as tales of persecutions and martyrdoms.[8]

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[4] Voragine, *La Legende Dorée* (13th century), so tells the story.

[5] The works made public under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, which long exercised an influence upon the mystical type of Christian thought, are now known to date not earlier than the beginning of the sixth century. See, among others, Duchesne, *L'Église au VI<sup>e</sup> Siècle.*

[6] Holmes, *The Christian Church in Gaul,* 160.

[7] Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica,* Introd., *passim,* II, 32.

[8] For an excellent introduction to the subject of Christian martyrology, Puech, *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque Chrétienne,* II, 295-300.

The martyrdoms during the reign of Marcus Aurelius are well authenticated,[9] serving further to inform us that Christianity evidently entered Gaul, not from Italy but from Asia Minor. The city of Marseilles had been of Greek foundation, and remained sufficiently Greek for the Romans to make of another city, Arles, a competing port. All of the cities of the lower Rhône Valley, during the Roman period, seem to have attracted Greek artisans and merchants, who traded actively with Egypt and the Orient.[10] The Emperor Caligula (37-41 A.D.) instituted at Lyons oratorical contests both in Latin and Greek, as a part of the policy of Romanizing Gaul.

The period of Marcus Aurelius was one of great preoccupation with religion, in which Gaul played no small part. The cult of the emperor, whatever part it may have played in uniting Gaul and cementing the population in a Roman allegiance, had before the middle of the second century proved a failure as a popular religion. After the reign of Trajan other cults, some perhaps even introduced by the Emperor Hadrian himself, began to enter Gaul freely, particularly the three most popular religions of the time. Two of these we have already briefly described. The third was welcomed with more enthusiasm, the army aside, than either of the other two. *Enthusiasm* was indeed of the essence of its rites. This third religion was the cult of the Great Mother, or the Mother of the Gods.

This cult, like Mithraism but much earlier, had come to Greece and Rome from the East. The *Great Mother* was the Earth considered as the source of life and fertility. She was also Mother Ida (Mater Idæa), the Mountain Mother, spirit of the wild vegetation of the upland woods, at a time when man might claim a partial dominion over the cities and the small tilled valley plots, but left the vast uncharted remainder of nature entirely to the gods. Later joined with Attis in what we have recently been taught to call an Œdipus complex, the two made up a symbolic representation of plant and seed, or fruit.

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[9] The letter written from the churches of Lyons and Vienne to the churches in Asia and Phrygia at the time of these persecutions, which appears in Eusebius (*History,* V, 1) will be later referred to. Gregory of Tours has also independent material (*History of Franks,* I, xxvi, xxvii).

[10] Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule,* V, 15-16, and many isolated references. Imbert de la Tour, *Histoire de la Nation Française* (ed. Hanitaux), III, 70.

This cult was excellently fitted to draw together under a single form of worship, furnished with a developed mythology, a ritual and a priesthood, scattered vegetation and fertility cults which the formal state religion with which Rome had erased the political cult of the Gauls had scarcely touched. For the Gauls wild nature, the mysterious bubbling fountain, the cloud-capped mountain summit, the deep forest from which man fled at dusk, had always been richly populated with gods and goddesses.

Moreover this cult had already lived long enough in cities to have learned what men wanted there, to touch that in them which city life left largely unsatisfied. It had developed symbol and mystery, there was a baptism, not of water but of blood, which trickled from the death-wound of a slaughtered bull over the head and shoulders of the initiate that thus new divine energy might be imparted to him, or her (for this cult did not, like Mithraism, reject but rather attracted women). And its priests were not, as those of the Roman state religion, public officials. They were sacred persons, neither men nor women but eunuchs who dressed in women's clothing. So Attis, the Mother-Goddess' son, says of himself, seeking his proper gender: *"Ego nunc deum ministra et Cybeles famula ferar?"* [11] It was, in short, at its best a religion of ecstasy or thrill, at its worst a religion of orgy. The temptingly uncanny priests of the Great Mother, with distended drums and hollow cymbals, marched in company through the city streets, their hollow pipes exciting the emotions of the populace with wild Phrygian music. Before them they carried outstretched weapons as signs of untamed fury, impressing the hearts of the profane crowd with the power of the goddess. And as she distributed among them her silent blessing the populace strewed her course with silver and copper coins, and covered the emblem and priests with a shower of roses, while the god-intoxicated votaries danced with ropes about the sacred emblem, from time to time lashing at one another with the knotted cords until their blood spotted the pavement.[12]

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[11] Catullus, Poem LXIII, line 68. This poem might be called a humanistic, rather than religious treatment of the Attis Myth.

Christianity, preached in the public baths and market places of Lyons and Vienna, could not in every sense compete with this religion, whatever flagellant possibilities, under a somewhat different propulsion, it might later develop. Moreover the city of Lyons particularly presented another obstacle; it was the official center of the state cult. It is therefore not surprising that the Christians, persisting in spite of prohibition in their attempt to spread their faith, should have met with opposition, nor that many of them, in the words of Gregory of Tours, should have been, "for the name of Christ, crowned with the celestial diamonds of martyrdom."[13]

The account of the first known persecution of Christians in Gaul, at Lyons in 177 A.D., has become one of the classic accounts of Christian martyrdom. It is written with a purity and loftiness of style and conception that has tempted critics to assign its authorship to the greatest of the Greek Christian Fathers of the second century, Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons following the one who fell victim to this persecution. From its pages has been particularly remembered the figure of the young Greek female slave Blandine, who, having been first forced to watch the torture of her fellow Christians, exhorting one particularly, a boy of fifteen and wretchedly terrified, then met death herself, "like a nobly-born mother (in contrast to her slave state) who had first urged on her children, sending them before her as conquerors into the kingdom," then following herself.[14]

The martyr spirit is one not likely to be understood in a time like our own, and in this we are probably much like those who wondered to see a woman meet a violent death, the mental and physical suffering of which was aggravated in every possible way, when by a few words, a mere form of political assent if you will, she might have avoided it. There was, in the spirit of such martyrs, something of the ecstasy people sought in the baptism of blood of the Mother-Goddess cult, but no one can seriously doubt as to which baptism of blood was the more difficult ordeal to see through. Even the Gentile bystanders admitted, says the writer of the letter, that never at any time among them had a woman endured to suffer in that way and to that extent.

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[12] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura,* II, 598ff.

[13] *History of the Franks,* I, xxvi.

[14] Eusebius, *History,* V, 1 (sec. 209 in Oxford text).

It is worthy of note that the story of this persecution does not bring evidence of a cult which had as yet made much headway among native Gauls. All the names mentioned are of Greeks. Gregory of Tours gives a list of forty-eight martyrs and confessors, almost one-third of the names being still Greek, though the majority postdated this persecution.[15] It seems evident that Christianity in Gaul was, and remained for some time still, a missionary campaign which centered in Lyons, the Roman capital of Gaul. It is not even claimed by Christian tradition which may be seriously considered that there were Christian bishops in Gaul, except at Lyons, before the middle of the next century. Indeed one might gather from Gregory of Tours that well into the fourth century, in the center of Gaul, "those who were Christians celebrated the Eucharist secretly and in hidden places, because if it happened that they were discovered by the pagans they were showered with blows, or even beheaded with the sword." [16]

One strongly suspects that Christian missionaries were not always as urbane, in their dealings with those of other faith, as Paul is pictured as being in Athens. The gentle Blandine is spoken of as *mocking* the heathen gods when commanded to pay them honor, thus angering her persecutors the more against her.[17] Another martyr of Gaul retorts to his persecutors, who fell upon him as a crowd of them were leading a bull to sacrifice in Toulouse, and dragged him off to sacrifice with them, "I know the one true God. To him I will offer sacrifices of praise. Your gods I know to be evil spirits." [18] One does not altogether wonder that, under the circumstances, they tied the feet of this zealous bishop to the rope with which they had been leading the bull, and then drove it, dragging him behind along the rough street, until he was bruised and gored to death.

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[15] Holmes, *The Christian Church in Gaul,* 47.
[16] *History of the Franks,* I, xliii.
[17] Eusebius.
[18] Holmes, *The Christian Church in Gaul,* 61.

The hero of this martyr tale became linked with what appears to have been a more general attempt to spread the Christian religion in Gaul toward the middle of the third century. Around this missionary campaign legend has accumulated the names of seven bishops sent to seven important cities of Gaul; to Tours, Gatien; to Arles, Trophimus; to Narbonne, Paul; to Toulouse, Saturninus (the one martyred by a bull as above recounted); to Clemont-Ferrand, Austremonius; to Limoges, Martial; and to Paris, Dionysius. (Legend was so little curious that it never stopped to ask whether this Dionysius, sent to Paris in or about the year 250, could have been the same man whom Paul had converted at Athens two hundred years earlier.) [19]

The mystical qualities of the number *seven,* here as in many other places, played their part in making up the list which tradition hands down; the general missionary movement however may be credited, dating somewhere in the third quarter of the third century. As a matter of fact, from 275 until roughly 300 Christianity might have enjoyed comparative peace in Gaul, and on account of the mildness, and probably monotheistic tendencies of the father of Constantine, who ruled in Gaul during the reign of Diocletian, even the long persecution ordered by that Emperor was more tolerable in Gaul than elsewhere.

In the meantime political conditions were working in a sense favorably to the spread of Christianity. From the death of the Emperor Alexander Severus, in 235, the cities of Gaul began to decline in influence. An era of social and political disorder succeeded to the long *Roman peace,* under which Gaul had flourished perhaps more than any other portion of the Empire. From 258 to 273 Gaul had its own Roman emperor, Postumus reigning there until 267. Indeed Gaul even accomplished the feat of having seven emperors in a single year, of whom six were massacred. In 275-276 at least sixty cities of Gaul were sacked within twelve months. Cities were too conspicuous prey in this time of disorder.

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[19] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks,* I, xxviii.

The barbarian invasions had already begun, and Roman generals, competing for the doubtful prize of ruling a few months, contributed to the ruin. Other causes, of less violent origin, helped the decay of commerce and industry upon which the prosperity of the cities rested. The coinage had been debased until money had become almost useless in trade. Even the landed proprietors could not sell the produce of their estates, and went from one domain to another to consume it themselves. But it was the middle class in the cities and the small landowners who suffered most. The need in which they were left, their small resources having disappeared, made slaves of some of them. In rural districts the large owners increased their holdings on ridiculous terms, or took the small freeholder under their protection, at the price of his freehold. The whole social situation was undergoing change; the hegemony of the cities, which began to shrink in population and extent, and were later further to contract behind high walls, had begun to pass to the owners of immense rural landed estates.

Christianity had already, in its early struggles around the shores of the Mediterranean, proven its power to arouse a fervor of hope among the socially unfortunate, and during the troubled third century in Gaul it appears to have made real, though still unorganized, progress. Of the emperors who ruled there from 275 until the accession of Diocletian two, Tacitus and Probus, were among the best of the many emperors of that century. Under them Gaul enjoyed a brief period of comparative peace, during which the Christian even began to erect places of public worship. When, in 314, a Church Council was held for the first time in Gaul, though near the outskirts at Arles, among the bishops reported as present a number represented cities of Gaul.[20]

Despite the fact that the earliest Christians in Gaul whose names have come down to us were Greeks, the Church there, when it began to organize, became closely linked with Rome. Immediately after the persecution at Lyons the new bishop, Irenæus, went to Rome, perhaps to receive confirmation of his elec-

[20] Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles* (I, 178) and Holmes, *The Christian Church in Gaul,* 127, differ as to the number present. There appear to have been from six to twelve, though some may have been titular bishops of still unorganized sees.

tion and consecration from the Bishop of Rome. In 190 he again went on an embassy to Rome. Indeed, during the second and third centuries the missionaries in the western portion of the Empire looked continually for guidance to Rome. A canon of the Council of Nicæa recognizes an ancient custom, giving the Bishop of Rome a still undefined jurisdiction over the provinces of the West,[21] and this was in a measure useful to Constantine in the Donatist and afterwards in the Arian controversies, he making the Bishop of Rome responsible for the preservation of orthodoxy in that part of his realm. So the Church in Gaul was rooted and trained to follow the leadership of Rome in matters of faith.

Unfortunately, however, when the Arian Emperor Constantius visited Arles in 353 he so impressed the local bishop as to leave him an Arian. The Bishop of Arles was in effect the Metropolitan of Gaul, a jurisdiction more clearly defined at that time than that of the Bishop of Rome over the West generally. Gaul was therefore directly plunged into the Arian controversy. In 353 at Arles, and in 356 at Beziers, upon Gallic soil, two of the most flagrantly Arian synods were held. Athanasius was condemned and the emperor forbade the Italian bishops to have any communication with him, the Bishop of Rome was exiled, an Arian put in his place by order of the emperor.

In the meantime Gaul had discovered its own defender of the Nicene Symbol, in the person of Hilary of Poitiers, who was also exiled, for the purpose of his education in the Arian faith perhaps, to the East.

As a matter of fact Hilary did not like the Eastern prelates, finding them both lazy and supine in his opinion, as doubtless the majority of them were. Listening to the debates of a council which the emperor's Legate left disgusted, bidding those present *go and babble in the church by themselves,* he grew only firmer in his own opinion, appealed to the emperor for a hearing, and instead of this being granted, perhaps because the Arians did not themselves like his influence, he suddenly found his exile terminated. Before he arrived in Gaul Julian was emperor, and Chris-

[21] Evidenced but left undefined in Canon VI of the Nicene Council.

tians might quarrel about doctrine with perfect freedom so long as they caused no public commotion and did not fly at one another's throats.

Hilary fought effectively against Arianism in Gaul, by disclosing to his countrymen the networks of conflicting opinion into which the East had been plunged in their finespun argumentations, the intrigue which had resulted, and exposing the tyranny of an emperor who used the secular power in enforcing his heretical faith. Under Julian the Bishop of Rome was no longer called upon to occupy the equivocal position he had accepted as the price of being reseated after removal by Constantius, and in 360 or 361 a synod in Paris declared the allegiance of Gaul to the Nicene faith.

In the meantime Hilary of Poitiers had adopted as a protégé the most romantic figure among the Western saints of the early Christian centuries; Martin of Tours.

For a number of years previous to his death, and following through the centuries of the Middle Ages, Martin of Tours touched the popular imagination to an extent equaled by but one later saint, Francis of Assisi. In the twelfth century his tomb was still one of the two most popular goals of religious pilgrimage in Europe.

Martin was born in a garrison colony on the outskirts of the Empire, in the general region of the modern Budapest. His father, a common soldier risen to the rank of tribune, was soon moved to a post near Milan. Both parents were pagan. By whom his enthusiasm for Christianity was aroused we do not know, but he told his first biographer that, at the age of ten he desired baptism, and that at twelve he wanted to be a hermit. The early ambitions of Francis of Assisi turned toward the troubadours. This difference of ambition was partly due to the different circumstances of their early surroundings, partly to the different ideals of their respective times, but even more to the difference in their characters. Francis remained always something of a troubadour, and Martin enough of a hermit to have probably told his first biographer that, since becoming a bishop, for the people of Tours chose him as such by ruse, he had less abundance of spiritual power than before.[22] In the character of the zeal with which they both prosecuted the path their imaginations spread before them they were much alike, and the first adventure of Christian chivalry of Martin had something of the gesture of an act of Francis. While still a soldier in the Roman army, serving against his will, for in his time the sons of soldiers were required to follow the career of their father whether they wished or not, passing a shivering beggar he removed his soldier's cloak, drew his sword, cut it through the middle, gave half of it to the beggar and went on, ridiculously clothed in the remaining half.[23]

Around such a figure in those days legend quickly gathered, and although Sulpicius Severus, from whom all our information as to Martin's life is gained, himself visited the saint to obtain material for a biography, it is impossible in the work he wrote to separate completely myth and fact. Severus shows himself credulous in a degree almost unbelievable to us. Also he had visited the hermits of the East, about whom marvelous tales were told, and he had gathered part of his information about Martin from the monks of Martin's little community, on the banks of the Loire opposite Tours. Doubtless these monks too had heard tales of the Eastern hermits and monks, and were not willing to see their own wonder-worker outdone.

It is impossible here to recount the miracles credited to him, and the still greater number later credited to the power of his relics. Of these Gregory of Tours about two hundred years later collected one hundred and thirty-six.[24]

There is, however, one tale of Martin, told by Severus, and said by him to have been gained directly from Martin himself, which helps us to understand the temperament of Martin, and something of the atmosphere in which striking events gathered about them the air of miracle.

About the middle of winter Martin, then Bishop of Tours, visited one of his parishes, where the clergy had sought to make him comfortable for the night by laying down for him, upon the floor of a chamber they had heated with a fire, a pallet of straw. Soon after having lain down Martin, accustomed to no such soft bed, became annoyed at such luxury and threw aside the straw. Then he fell more comfortably asleep. But meanwhile the fire laid in the chamber was communicated to some of the straw he had cast irritably aside, and he awoke to find himself surrounded with flame.

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[22] Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogues,* II, iv.

[23] Sulpicius Severus, *Life of Saint Martin,* chap. iii.

[24] Gregory of Tours, *The Seven Books of Miracles,* iii, iv and v.

Martin, tempted as he said by the Devil to try the arm of the flesh as a means of escape, made his way to the door and tried vigorously to throw the bolt which closed it. At length, recovering his habitual conviction that his safety lay in prayer, he lay down in the midst of the flames and began to pray, the fire making as it were a magic circle in the midst of which he lay unharmed until the monks whose guest he was, aroused by the smoke and flame, perhaps also by his attempts to get the door open, came to his rescue and put out the fire.[25]

One can picture in this adventure, which so probably actually happened, the fiery, vigorous and romantic zealot, who wielded, sometimes an ax with a doughty arm, or again the thunders and lightnings of heaven, in destruction of heathen temples roundabout.

[25] Sulpicius Severus, "Letter to Eusebius."

# XXI

Augustine, Hilary, Martin, Ambrose, the four Western churchmen of the late fourth and early fifth centuries which we have had occasion specially to mention, were all bishops, and at the same time were all founders of monastic communities.

As has already been said [1] monasticism was an outgrowth of the ascetic tendencies which entered Christianity along with Greek philosophy at a time when the two words *ascetic* and *philosopher* had become, on account of the prevalent theories of the origin of evil, practically synonymous. The original monk was, as the word implies (*monakos,* as a substantive in Greek, a *solitary*) a hermit. But if the desire to become hermits grows too popular its popularity in a measure defeats the primary object. It crowds the hermits so close together that the avoidance of social intercourse becomes more of a burden than its acceptance. In a measure the community life (*Koinobion* or cenobite or conventual organization) gradually evolved from the inconveniences of an overpopulation of hermits in the Egyptian desert regions. But there was also a growing consciousness of the psychological difficulties and dangers of solitary life; an accumulation of experience which made the older solitaries natural teachers of the younger aspirants, and around the relationship of teacher and neophyte rule and organization inevitably grew. There was also, both among Jews and Pagans, the example and tradition of religious-ascetic communities. The hermit impulse is however primary, liable to arise anywhere and at any time, given but an idea about which it may center, as a retreat from the injuries and complexities of civilized existence. The miser, for example, tends to be a hermit, not only that he may hide his hoard from the thievishly inclined, but because organized society seems one vast conspiracy tempting or forcing him to spend. So the desire for salvation may beget a miserly impulse to flee where the grime of social intercourse, where the profane dust of ordinary inclination is not persistently soiling and wearing away the skirts of his holiness.

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[1] Chapter XIII.

Western monasticism was never given generally to the ascetic extravagances which developed in Egypt and other portions of the East. There were several reasons for this. For one thing, Western monasticism arose at a period when there was no longer anywhere in the Roman world that confidence in the visionary experiences bred by asceticism which had been able for a time to work a sort of exaltation in the minds of pagan and Christian alike. Then too the Western spirit was more practical, trusted less in ideas. Moreover a more inclement climate encouraged activity, which activity in turn made the body more insistent. A bundle of herbs and half a barley cake did not appeal to them as a breakfast for five men.[2] Finally, Jerome, under whose supervision some of the first monastic adventures in the West were made, understood and warned against the psychological temptations of the solitary life.[3]

Martin of Tours, who had wished to be a hermit at the age of twelve, later had an opportunity to try the life upon two different lonely islands of the Mediterranean, but he later became both an inmate of and founder of monastic communities, and the hermit became an always existent aberration, never the rule in Western monasticism.

A few years before the middle of the fourth century the monastic enthusiasm began in the West. A century later Western monasticism had developed to the form under which it mostly flourished, with the *Rule of Benedict.* In tracing briefly its growth during that century we will have before us the growing rootage of an institution by means of which European civilization was largely molded during the centuries preceding the fully conscious Middle Ages.

[2] Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogues,* I, iv.

[3] Jerome, "Ad Rusticem," a letter to a young Gaul who aspired to be a solitary monk.

In the vicissitudes of his tenaciously persistent career Athanasius, driven from pillar to post, partly at least because of his veritable gift for incurring the personal dislike of Roman emperors,[4] had opportunity to learn at first hand the manner of life of the Eastern ascetics, and to promulgate his enthusiasm for their austerities in the West. In 339, driven from Alexandria, he came to Rome, two Eastern ascetics accompanying him, and eliciting much curious interest. One of them, to avoid being made a bishop, had cut off one of his ears.[5] The Jewish law incapacitated any man who was not sound and complete of members for the priesthood. The same man refused to look at any of the sights of Rome, save the tombs of Peter and Paul. The other appears to have been of gentler temperament, if we may believe that it was he who exhorted one of his fellows to rest from his quarrels with the devils, since there was a measure in everything.[6]

Certain groups among the aristocratic ladies of the city of Rome became enamored with Eastern ascetics. Athanasius fed the flame by writing a life of St. Anthony, who died in 342, devoting much space to the many and crafty devices of the Devil by which he attempted to entrap the senses of Anthony, and depicting him as one who had polished all the ascetic arts and exhibited in his person their great beauty.[7] This biography "circulating through all the West, immediately acquired there the popularity of a legend, and the authority of a confession of faith." [8] When Jerome arrived in Rome about forty years later many Roman women of the highest social station, descendants of the Scipios, the Gracchi, and other families whose glory dated from the period of republican Rome, had made cloisters of their palaces, went about in coarse clothing, slept upon hard couches, and distributed their money among the poor.

It is hardly to be expected that this enthusiasm was always well advised. One woman, who expressed herself as longing to be a beggar herself, since then others would give to her, and she need not fear that, having refused one single beggar she might be answerable for his soul, left on dying not a cent to her daughter, many debts, and a pack of relations who had to be fed, and were perhaps less eager to beg than she.[9]

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[4] Constantine, Constantius and Julian appear all to have had an underlying personal dislike of him.

[5] *Paradise of Palladius,* I, xi.

[6] Budge, *Questions and Answers on the Ascetic Rule,* 617.

[7] *Life of Saint Anthony,* I, 12 (in edition of Budge, see *Paradise of Father*).

[8] Montalambert, *The Monks of the West* (Eng. trans.), I, 224.

When Jerome returned to the East, where in his hermitage at Bethlehem he began his monumental translation of the Bible into Latin (which is the basis of the Vulgate, the official Bible text of the Roman Church), several of these women accompanied him, enamored with the idea of undertaking the ascetic life upon the sacred soil of Palestine. One of them had soon to return, fearing the Huns who had begun to invade Syria. As the Gothic invaders began to work their destruction in Italy many rich nobles, men and women, felt it an excellent idea to save their property from the barbarians by selling it and giving the proceeds to the poor.

This movement in Rome is perhaps one of the best commentaries we have upon the general footlessness and boredom of fashionable Rome in the fourth century. The Christians shared it with those who remained pagans. Jerome writes of the Christian cleric who was the first one to knock at the door of fashionable women, recounting to them the latest gossip or scandal while his hostess, caught at the moment of rising, divided her attention between him and the problems of her toilet. Between titbits he, if he spied some delicate object which he coveted, would praise it, handle it, complain that he had at home nothing so nice, until in the end it was given to him.[10]

Such clerics it would not have been difficult to find in the time of François de Sales, in the time of Ernest Renan. They do, however, serve to remind us that the highborn Roman matrons who turned with new hope and energy to pious austerities and humble services were not merely seeking to lay hold on salvation in some future world, but to escape triviality in the present one. And we are reminded also of one other thing; that, with all the gray melancholy implied, all the disillusionment, Christianity had grown up. Some three centuries earlier it had been the consoler at Rome of the outcast and the hopelessly poor; now, with a picturesque asceticism it was seen the energizer of the bored and purposeless rich.

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[9] " . . . fratrum et sororum immensam multitudinem, quos sustenare arduum et abjicere impium est," Jerome, Letter 92.

[10] Jerome, Letter 22.

It should not be imagined that such asceticism became fashionable in the sense of rendering those who practiced it immune to ridicule or censure from their own class, or from the solid middle strata who at all times so well protect society from extravagances, either of good or evil. Jerome reminds us that it took courage for a Roman senator to appear in public in a rough garment and mingle, a simple fellow man, among the poor.[11] Again he tells how, at the funeral of the daughter of one of his protégées the onlookers cried out that she had been killed by fasting, and that the *miserable monks* who had seduced the unfortunate mother into such practices should be driven from the city, stoned, or thrown into the river.[12]

This ascetic movement in Rome among the aristocrats was but a dramatic prelude to the growth of monasticism. The net spread broader and broader, gathering in a generous proportion of the most energetic and spirited personalities of the time, together with some scourings of social misfits.[13]

The monastery founded in 361 by Hilary of Poitiers and Martin of Tours, upon a small farm Hilary possessed a few miles from Poitiers, *Ligugé,* is generally considered to have been the first in Gaul.[14] Judging by the fact that there was no written rule among the monks Martin a little later gathered together in his own episcopal city of Tours,[15] it is probable that here at the beginning the monks followed in a general way, and without a definite set of rules, the way of life which had developed among the Eastern monks, modified as the climate demanded. A certain portion of physical labor was required of all the monks, but not the sedentary task of mat and basket making, which served in the East to occupy the minds of the ascetics while they brooded upon the wickedness of the world and planned new types of self-punishment. They tilled their little plots of garden, and as a sedentary task occupied themselves with the copying of manuscripts. Though Martin left himself no literary works he seems particularly to have encouraged this activity.

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[11] "Letter to the Senator Pammachus."

[12] "Letter to Paula, on the death of her daughter Blesilla."

[13] Some such Augustine appears to have gathered among his monks at Hippo.

[14] The monastery at Ligugé still exists as an active community.

[15] Some of the caves, used as cells by Martin's monks, may still be seen. The monastery of Marmoutier has however become a convent of nuns.

Some bishops began to organize their assistant clergy under monastic rule, the mark of which has remained among the institutions of Western Christendom in the title canon (meaning originally one who lived under a religious *rule*) given to clerics attached in actual activity or as an honor, to the services of a cathedral church.

During the last years of the fourth century everyone was forming monasteries in a way too experimental and impressionistic to suit the taste of a certain John Cassian, who spent several years among the Eastern ascetics, interviewing industriously all those whose fame reached his ears. He returned to the West with the idea of a rule, having concluded that "in Egypt and the Thebaid . . . monasteries were not founded at the fancy of every man who renounced the world."[16] When he founded one, near Marseilles, he wrote for it two long treatises, the more systematic of which was entitled, *Institutes of the Cœnobia and the Remedies for the Eight Principal Faults.*

It is interesting to note that already it had been discovered, by monks who had begun with the theory that one must by ascetic exercises *mortify the flesh,* that of the "eight principal faults," two only, gluttony and fornication, were as they would have said of the flesh, the other six being covetousness, anger, dejection, weariness or flatness of spirit, vainglory and pride.

Cassian's aim was to snatch men and women from the world for their salvation, to be gained in contemplating holy things, on account of which he advised his monks to flee women and bishops, neither of whom would leave them in peace to cultivate their souls.[17] But a few years earlier, not far away on a little island opposite Cannes, the monastery of Lerins was founded, which became a school from which many active missionaries and bishops were sent throughout Europe.

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[16] Cassian, *Institutes,* II, iii.

Unfortunately, when the West had definitely decided against the Arians, and the monastic communities had prepared an asylum for those who were soon to be harassed by Arian Goths and Vandals, the ever-active Satan discovered a new heresy exactly fitted to trouble the orthodoxy of monks, and as his instrument for its propagation he chose a Britisher, one Morgan, who having much studied the writings of Greek theologians had metamorphosed his name into the Greek form, Pelagius.

Jerome, himself lean, nervous and irascible, speaks of Pelagius as "very stolid and weighted down with Scotch porridge."[18] Such pleasantries of theological controversy aside, he was apparently an ethically exemplary, very scholarly, slow-pulsed, *once-born* aspirant for salvation, who had never known the raptures of conversion. Living *like a monk,* though attached to none of the then arising communities, studying the moral precepts of Jesus and following them literally, he had never found himself oppressed by the conviction of congenital or inherent sinfulness. From this unfortunate experience he developed the heretical opinion that men had actually led sinless lives, following the dictates of a law written in their own hearts, before any objective law of holiness had been divinely revealed. Applying this principle, with his disciple Cœlestius, to certain important doctrines, he concluded that Adam would have died whether or not he had sinned; that infants were not born inheritors of Adam's sin, but in the condition in which Adam was born; that just as Adam's sin was not the cause of death's dominion over man, so the resurrection of Christ was not the sole cause of man's possibility of eternal life.

Augustine, whose whole Christian life was dominated by the conviction that he had been saved by the direct care and intervention of God, became his principal opponent. Had the controversy involved nothing further than two fundamentally different types of religious experience Augustine and Pelagius might have been allowed to argue the matter as fully as they wished, for the edification of the temperaments which leaned to one or to the other side, and we might dismiss the controversy by referring the reader to William James *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

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[17] *Institutes,* XI, xviii.

[18] "Stolidissimus et Scotorum pultibus praegravatus."

But something of broader import was involved; the whole organized system of the Christian Church.

Monasticism was plainly an instrument of personal human salvation. It was moreover, at the time, in vast preponderance a *lay* institution. Few monks were in clerical orders, comparatively few even of the leaders of monasticism and the founders and heads of monastic communities.[19] It was even a well-formed tradition of monasticism to flee ordination and activity in the *secular* (worldly) Church. If then it were admitted that monks, without the benefit of clergy, without sacred hands in baptism, confirmation and communion, might achieve their own salvation, what in the end would happen to that power so rapidly accumulating in the hands of the bishops?

For Pelagianism did almost immediately invade monastic communities, and in a softened form (semi-Pelagianism related to the greater malady somewhat as scarletina to scarlet fever) infected John of Cassian and his five thousand followers, infected too influential minds sheltered in the monastery of Lerins.

A little careful definition saves many a heresy from working its full havoc, and it is after all a lonely business seeking salvation in the Pelagian way. Semi-Pelagianism furnished a less compromising form, tainted only with heresy, by which to slide back into the bosom of the Church, and monasticism was saved within the fold. Augustine himself soon inspired a form of organization for it which long endured, and in the first quarter of the fifth century Benedict drew together the moderate, benign and scholarly type of monasticism which was to become typical, both in its accomplishment and in its failure, of Western monasticism during the period of its greatest influence. Until the epoch of influence of the Franciscan and Dominican friars Western monasticism, in the midst of and because of its many interests and activities, was always and everywhere practicing, debilitating, degenerating or reforming the ideals and habits of Benedictine monks. It is therefore worth our while to understand something of the achievement of their founder.

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[19] Benedict, the saintly founder of the Benedictine Order, was apparently never n clerical orders, and many outstanding names of monks who remained laymen, or accepted reluctantly ordination might be mentioned.

Benedict was born in 480, a time which causes the great modern apologist for Western monasticism, Montalambert, to weep veritable tears of words. The Church was more than ever before infected with heresy and schism; in all the Roman world there was no prince who was not either pagan or heretic. The barbarians had begun to found states, "not without distinction," he admits, "but of which not one belonged to the Catholic faith." Even the monks, as well as the rest of the clergy, too often gave "an example of disorder and scandal." [20] To come a little nearer to the nonemotional facts, Benedict was born of an excellent Roman family, in Italy, at a time when there were in that country three well-marked religious strata; the generally Christianized upper and middle class of Roman population, interspersed colonies of Teutons of the Arian persuasion, and a rural peasantry still mostly of that religion to which the name "pagan" had now become appropriate.[21]

From this world Benedict fled to live alone in a cave among the Sabine Hills, and there to practice austerities of asceticism which he later rejected for the order which he founded. Gregory the Great, his first biographer, says that when first discovered by some shepherds they mistook him for a wild animal. Soon disciples began to seek him out in this retreat, and after some years he had established, according to tradition, twelve communities of twelve monks each, under abbots of his choosing.[22] Then local clergy became envious of his influence and hostile. According to legend they tried to poison him, but crows carried away the bread which had been intended as a means of ridding themselves of Benedict. As a consequence of this hostility Benedict, with a few chosen followers, left to found a new community in another solitude, halfway between Rome and Naples. This abbey, Monte Cassino, still exists as the mother abbey of the Benedictine Order.

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[20] Montalambert, *The Monks of the West* (Eng. trans.), I, 306, 307.

[21] Cuthbert Butler, *Le Monachisme Benedictin* (French trans.), 8.

[22] The precise number of years he passed in this cave at Subiaco, all the early life of Benedict, the number of monks gathered there, are surrounded with an atmosphere of legend, and important facts are matters largely of conjecture.

Benedict's experience with ascetic mortifications, and his experience with men, had doubtless led to some very definite conclusions that brought about radical departures from the ideas of Cassian, which he had of course studied, when he drew up a rule for his own community.

> We are about to found a school of service of the Lord, in which institution we hope to establish nothing rigorous or burdensome. But if, following the reasonable dictates of equity as a means of correcting viciousness and conserving charity, we should arrive at some things a little restricting, do not on account of this, from fear, flee the way of salvation, upon which it is impossible to set out save through a narrow entrance. But once having proceeded upon the way of conversion and faith, with dilated heart one begins to run with unspeakable sweetness of love the way of God's commandments.[23]

So Benedict states his purpose, and the same spirit directed his choice of seventy-two precepts which this Rule lays down. It can scarcely be said that the principle of fleshly mortification is entirely cast aside,[24] but the focus of mortification is not the body but the will.[25] As a consequence humility becomes the cardinal virtue, the theory being that the will is by nature self-seeking, and turned toward the way of the world, so that the beginning of salvation is *conversion* (turning aside the will from its instinctive worldly direction), and the beginning of conversion is *humiliation.* Of humility Benedict distinguishes twelve degrees, after having mounted all of which the monk is not far from arriving at that perfect love of God which casts out all fear, and makes the precepts, formerly observed because of terror inspired by the thought of Hell, from thenceforth a natural and zealous habit of loving service.[26]

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[23] Prologue to the *Benedictine Rule,* par. 8.

[24] Corpus castigare. . . . Delicias non amplecti," chap. iv of *Rule.*

[25] It is interesting to note how the thought of Augustine has already become basic in Christian thought upon this subject.

Such, briefly, is the rationale of Benedict's *Rule.* The monastic community was intended to be an environment favorable to such living as brought about this result. What he aimed to establish were conditions among which might be lived what he considered the normal Christian life, centering about the act of worship, but allowing for the normal activities and needs of the body. Women and the married state were banned, Christianity having definitely concluded that marriage was a mere concession made by God to human weakness. This exclusion aside, a little company of monks, bound for life to the Rule, to one another, and to their monastery, undertook a sort of family life, in which all the property was communal. They were allowed a reasonable amount of food, probably quite as much as was usual among the poorer laboring classes. If they wished they were allowed about the equivalent of half a bottle of wine a day, though counseled to do without any. Summer and winter averaged they were allowed almost eight hours of sleep in twenty-four, upon a mattress and pillow and covered with a blanket. They were expected to spend from six to seven hours in manual work, tilling gardens and fields, a few hours in pious reading, some four or five in religious exercises. Such living conditions were hardly more exacting than what the majority of the monks would have found in the secular world.

The whole system hinged upon the office of the abbot. The title comes from the Hebrew word for *father.* As Jesus among his disciples, so was the abbot to be among his monastic children. His will was to be absolute over them. Over their persons and the common property he was to exercise unlimited authority.

So was constituted the abbot's power. When Benedictine abbeys began to be rich, such power made the office one to be sought after. It must however be said that Benedict viewed this power solely from the standpoint of the responsibility involved.

> Let the abbot always remember that, at the fearful judgment day of God, examination will be made both as to what he has taught and as to

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[26] *Benedictine Rule,* chap. vii.

the obedience of his disciples; and let him know that the faults of the sheep will be laid to the charge of the shepherd.[27]

Benedict took account of differences of temperament among those who would embrace the monastic life, and lays upon the abbot the task of studying his monastic children, guiding rather than driving them, some needing caresses, some reprimands, others persuasion.[28] For delinquent brothers the abbot should have every solicitude, taking care with all possible sagacity and industry lest a single sheep be lost from his fold.[29] Despite the absolute power given him, the abbot is admonished to advise with the others before making decisions, even the youngest among them being called in counsel.[30] Notwithstanding this care for the gentleness of the abbot's authority, Christian art came to portray Benedict, his finger upon his lips to enjoin silence, a rod in his hands with which to chasten his children.

It is evident that Benedict had pondered much upon the pitfalls of the ascetic life. He became in consequence an innovator, not only in the matter of ascetic emphasis, but in other respects. He concludes that none should attempt the hermit life save those well schooled and disciplined by conventual life, also that monks who gathered in small communities with no rule set over them, calling whatever suited their opinions or preferences holy, and whatever they did not think or fancy illicit, were detestable. But worst of all were the *gyrovagues* (wanderers in circles) who ran from province to province, staying three or four days in every monastery they passed, slaves of their passions and the pleasures of their gullets.[31] Vagrancy, restlessness, vices which soon wore out a welcome everywhere, love of adventure and the strange and new, intellectual curiosity, continued always to tempt many monks, and to make many of them wanderers; so too of the friars later on, when vagrant friars seem almost more the rule than the exception. Against this temptation the Rule of Benedict bound the monks of his community to their particular monasteries for life.[32]

[27] *Benedictine Rule,* chap. ii, par. 2.

[28] *Ibid.,* par. 6.

[29] *Ibid.,* chap. xxvi, 1.

[30] *Ibid.,* chap. iii, 1, 2.

[31] *Ibid.,* chap. i, 1-4.

[32] There came of course to be many ways of avoiding this provision, and prominent Benedictines were by no means required to spend a lifetime in a single monastery.

Perhaps nothing more makes evident the paternal character of Benedict's ideal for his community than the fact that each community was intended to be independent of all others. He was interested neither in propagating his ideas nor extending his personal power. But here, as in so many other respects, the ideal did not stand against tempting possibilities of power, wealth and more passive human impulses later on. The first broad reform of the Order, as we shall see, did away with this characteristic, and built up the most centralized and powerful religious order that existed until the time of the Jesuits.

The intellectual distinction of the Benedictine Order, which remains in modern times perhaps its most striking characteristic, does not appear to have been part of the original idea of the founder. Early monks of Benedict were most of them simple peasants, some apparently of servile origin.[88] But when time brought and laid at the gates of Benedictine abbeys gifts of broad acres, rich manors, with peasants to till the land and rougher hands to load their granaries and storehouses, some of the monks in some of the monasteries (by no means the majority) turned to intellectual pursuits.

[88] *Rule,* chap. ii, 4.

# XXII

Long before the beginning of the fifth century Germanic tribes had begun their incursions into the domain of the Roman Empire, but in this century they began to set up, in Gaul, in Italy, in Spain, and in Africa independent political states. Some of these peoples were nominally converted to Christianity before entering the empire; the Franks, for example, the most independent of spirit and destined to outdo and outlast them all, were not. At all events certain racial characteristics of these people, the elements of civilization they brought which proved relatively lasting, the initial complications and eventual alterations of the European situation that resulted, were of considerable influence upon the complexion of Christianity for some time to come, and it will repay us to consider briefly this new element in the social-political potpourri preparing in western Europe.

As early as the beginning of the second century the Roman historian Tacitus both admired and feared their robust strength. Having no really intimate knowledge of them in their native haunts,[1] looking in contrast at the social decadence already to be discerned by a sharp eye in Italy, he was even inclined to exaggerate their virtues.

That they had virtues, particularly as contrasted with effete Italy, and a Gaul which had taken all too readily to the luxuries of Roman civilization, was scarcely to be denied. First of all, they admired physical courage above any other thing, and were politically organized, one might say, only for war; since it was for war only that their chiefs were chosen, and their tenure of office depended entirely upon continued confidence in their prowess in battle. On the other hand the Italians had long since given up fighting for themselves, and Julian wrote in the middle of the fourth century that the Gauls of his army could neither be persuaded nor forced to fight outside their own country.[2]

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[1] The *Germania* of Tacitus is said to be especially fallacious in its geography.

The blond Teutonic giants, Tacitus tells us, undertook no private or public affair unless armed.[3] When they could neither hunt nor fight they ate a great deal, drank a great deal, and lay about lazily, leaving the care of family, household and field to the women, the old men, and the weakest of the family group.[4] They scorned books and learning as enfeebling men. When, a little after the middle of the third century some of them occupied Athens, they were about to make a bonfire of books they had gathered when an old veteran said no, for it was better to let their enemies "waste their time poring over their wearisome contents," which would make them only the easier prey.[5] Even two centuries later Theodoric, an Ostrogothic king of real statesmanlike qualities, would not allow the Gothic youth to go to school, lest "the rods of the schoolmaster beat the courage out of them."[6]

In this preoccupation with war and the chase their women, whose influence among them a Roman historian considered worthy of special note,[7] abetted them. The legendary heroine Brunhilde would marry none who could not best her in three tests; casting a heavy stone, leaping after it, and hurling the javelin.[8] A more picturesque tale is told of Gregory of Tours, in connection with the Frankish king Childeric. When Childeric had made too free with the wives of his subjects he found it prudent to retire, taking refuge at the court of the King of Thuringia. Not long after his return to his own land the wife of his late host turned up at his castle, explaining that she had come to live with him: " 'For you know,' she said, 'that if I had known another man braver than you, even beyond the oceans, I should in the same way have wished to live with him.' "[9]

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[2] Letters, edit. Bude, No. 17, xv.

[3] *Germania,* xiii.

[4] *Ibid.,* xv.

[5] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* I, 58.

[6] Reicke, *Lehrer u. Unterrichtswesen i. d. deutschen Vergangenheit,* 7 (quoting Theodoric).

[7] *Germania,* viii.

[8] *Nibelungenlied,* Siebentes Abenteuer.

[9] *History of the Franks,* II, xii.

Despite the virtues lauded by Tacitus, and later by Salvian, life lingered long among them upon the borders of barbarism. It took many laws to protect from one another their domesticated animals and their women. One of these laws, providing penalty in cases where a maiden, *en route* with her trousseau to the home of the husband who had purchased her, was surprised upon the road by the armed band of a rival for her possession, suggests not altogether chivalric Lochinvars;[10] and the provisions of penalty for various typical cases where quarrels arising at public meetings[11] or during feasts[12] resulted in murder allow more than a suspicion that such affairs were often exciting to the point of intense realism.

The shepherd merging into the agriculturist; the barbarian upon the threshold of civilization—so they have been described at the moment when they awaited the shock of the invasion of the Huns.[13] Civilization is after all a comparative affair, and the Huns were of course decidedly on the light side of the balance in such a contrast.

But even at this time they had behind them a tradition of three important migrations; from the Scandinavian Peninsula to the Baltic shores of what is now East Prussia, from there to the south of Russia, facing the Euxine Sea, again from there into Asia Minor and the upper Balkan Peninsula, where for about a century they formed a barbarian wall about Constantinople, and from whence they were about to be dislodged by the Huns, to pour into western Europe: Gaul, Italy, Spain.[14]

What it would particularly interest us to know about is their religion previous to the time they began to be converted to Christianity, and also about the sense in which one may accurately say that they were, in the fourth century, converted.

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[10] *Leges Francorum, Salicae et Ripuariorum, etc.,"* ed. Eccardi. Salic Law, Title XIV, x.

[11] *Ibid.,* Title XLV.

[12] *Ibid.,* Title XLVI.

[13] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* I, 97.

[14] This is to speak of the Goths and Vandals. To trace the migrations of all these tribes is impossible here, and the evidence is scanty at best.

Unfortunately the answer to these questions is neither of them easy. At the beginning of the sixth century the great mass of them, whatever the Christian color of their leaders, were pagan; and, unfortunately for the historian of European religion, of a paganism (says one of the few greatest authorities) "which, due to the lack of texts, we shall never come to adequately understand." [15] Tacitus is perhaps as good an authority as any we have, and about all the solid information he can give us is that they had some great gods, whom he confounded with Mercury, Mars and Hercules; that to the one whom he calls Mercury they sacrificed human victims; and that they were, most of all people, given to divination.[16]

Great gods are difficult to carry from place to place, and are likely to be lost on the way somewhere, particularly if they may be confounded with the Mercuries and Herculi of other peoples. Divination, on the other hand, gets along fairly comfortably with almost any religion. The Jews found difficulty in keeping free of it, Romans were rather given to it themselves, and though the Greeks fought it for a time, except in the form of the dignified oracles of Delphi, they in the end succumbed.

Christianity to be sure penetrated to the Germanic tribes during the fourth century. Goths, Vandals, Burgundians and Lombards were at least nominally converted. Among the greater tribes only the Franks and the Saxons held out until later. In the middle of this century Ulfila, half Teuton and half Cappadocian, accomplished the truly monumental task of translating the Old and New Testaments, almost entire,[17] into the language of the Goths, adapting the Greek alphabet to a language which had previously not been written.

His principal converts were the *lesser* Goths (Gothi Minores) described by the earliest historian of the Gothic barbarians as "a numerous people, but poor and unwarlike." [18] However the chieftains of all these Gothic tribes were awed by the glory of the Roman Emperor, and for a long time delighted to be considered as his allies. Added to this the picturesque narrative elements of the Bible doubtless had much attraction for spirited and imaginative warriors, and there were obvious political advantages in drawing closer to the Emperor by accepting his religion.[19] Indeed when, retreating before the Huns, they asked permission to enter the territory of the Empire, it was voluntarily conceded only to the Emperor's *Christian* clients (376).[20]

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[15] Halphen, *Les Barbares,* 73.

[16] *Germania,* ix, x.

[17] He omitted to translate the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles,* lest they further inflame the too warlike spirit of his people.

[18] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* I, 67.

The emperors of that period being Arians, the Goths knew but one officially Christian religion, that of their Christian patrons, the Arian emperors. Entering western Europe they found the Christians, grouped about their bishops in the cities, or clustered in their monastic retreats, definitely of the persuasion of Rome and Athanasius.

This situation gave rise to new waves of persecution in the fifth century. Gregory of Tours tells, among other persecutors, of the Visigothic King Euric, or Eoric, who, in southern Gaul, "decapitated right and left those who refused to accept his perverse heresy," blocking the aisles of the *orthodox* churches, until the *faith* began to be forgotten.[21]

That such persecution did not become universal, wiping out the faith which had become orthodox in Gaul, was in part due to the monastic communities, still obscure and hardly worth pillaging. It was doubtless even more owing to the peculiar legal status of the Gothic settlement in western Europe, which was in many ways important for the evolving civilization.

Rome had been, for centuries before its downfall, an empire continually at war, with armies scattered everywhere about its realm, particularly in the provinces. In order to provide food and lodging for its soldiers some arrangement for quartering them upon the civilians where they happened to be became necessary, and from custom to law the practice was evolving of demanding, in cases where troops were to be quartered, one-third of each house to be turned over as billets. So, as the armies of Rome became more and more barbarian, the provincials were accustomed to give up one-third of their homes, and their produce, from time to time, to the barbarian soldiers of the Empire.

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[19] The Gothic princes considered their alliance with the Empire as *personal,* between monarch and monarch.

[20] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* I, 105.

[21] *History of the Franks,* II, xxv.

The first barbarian invasions entered western Europe with the more or less unwilling permission of the Roman authority, and the law and custom which had arisen for the quartering of Roman armies was utilized as a means of furnishing them land to colonize. They settled down, wherever they settled down peaceably, taking over to themselves, with the permission often of the imperial power, one-third of the tillable land.

So settled—the Roman Emperor losing more and more his hold upon the outer provinces, the Teutonic princes consolidating their authority—in the fifth century western Europe was occupied by four barbarian kingdoms, the Ostrogoths in Italy, Visigoths in Spain and Aquitaine, Burgundians in the central east of the present France, Franks in the north, the older and the new inhabitants living, not so much side by side as mingled throughout the territory. At the same time two types of custom, two systems of law, for a long time continued to exist, one for the Roman provincials, long accustomed to institutions organized under the influence of Roman law, another based upon the simpler tribal legal systems to a degree formulated before the Germanic tribes settled down in the Roman Empire.

This situation acted to increase the influence of the Christian bishops, and to give their office more and more political significance. As the Roman authority began to fall to pieces, even before the barbarian kingdoms were established, the Gallo-Roman aristocracy perceived the social authority which had attached itself to the episcopacy, and in many places able representatives of this class were made bishops.[22] They added to the religious authority of the office itself (with an organization becoming more and more effective, revenues becoming continually larger so that a bishop could distribute the public bounty and engage in monumental public works somewhat as the state and the Roman aristocracy had done)[23] the traditions and training of Roman statesmanship, and the prestige still attached to the senatorial rank. In the disorders accompanying the invasions, which preceded the organization of barbarian kingdoms, they gained increased influence, as the leaders and consolers of the Gallo-Roman populace in troubled times. When the Huns were nearing Orléans, having taken Metz, it was to their bishop that the citizens turned, demanding with desperate cries what they should do.[24] In addition to being priest, counselor, and wonder-working preserver, he was called upon to be an administrator, diplomat, even at times a general. Certain definite civil powers were already his, and circumstances made of him the spokesman of the Gallo-Roman element in Gaul, of the indigenous populations generally, before the barbarian leaders about to become kings.

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[22] Sidonius Apollinarius, Bishop of Clermont, had been Prefect of Rome. The father of Eucher, Bishop of Lyons, had been Prefect of Gaul.

The more statesmanlike of these barbarian kings, particularly Theodoric the Ostrogoth and Gundobad the Burgundian, treated Athanasian Christians with tolerance, their bishops with friendliness, and utilized the latter as mediators and diplomatic agents. Clovis, before his conversion even, though intent upon conquering the country which formed the core of the later Frankish kingdom, recognized the bishops as the true masters of the country and cultivated friendship with them from the beginning.[25]

These Germanic chieftains soon learned that law and settled institutions were necessary to the government of a country further advanced in civilization than they themselves, and that "the unrestrained barbarism of the Goths would not submit itself to the law"[26] without the sustaining force of the Romanized element. So it happened that Romans, Romanized provincials, and Germanic invaders, Arians and Athanasians, settled down together eventually, not a subjugated indigenous people under alien conquerors who constituted the ruling aristocracy, but a more complicated social entity, where, in Gaul for example, the Roman aristocrat, still rich in land despite what had been given up to the invader, the Gallic aristocrat, of whom much the same may be said, and the Germanic military chiefs, might all of them in time become *companions* of the king, the *counts* of the future.

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[23] Salvian wrote a treatise of complaint that some Christians died without leaving property to the Church.

[24] Gregory of Tours, *History of Franks,* II, vii.

[25] Bayet, *Histoire de France,* II, 97.

[26] Quoted from Orosius, who obtained information indirectly from conversations of the first Gothic aspirant for Western empire, Athaulf, who married the daughter of the Emperor Theodosius.

When this time had arrived, however, we shall see about the new Germanic emperor, two classes of lieutenants by whose arms he ruled: the bishops and the counts.

Considering Christianity in the fifth and sixth centuries one is bound to think much about politics. The monks aside, the only considerable Christian contribution to the future of European civilization was in the political sphere. Among the laity generally, and more particularly in the rural districts, the veneer of Christianity was pretty thin. One could indeed not have expected much of the secular clergy and the laity, since the monastic ideal was so dominant that scarcely anyone would have believed it possible to lead a strenuous Christian life outside of a monastery or nunnery.

In the hands and minds of the ordinary Christian the religion had begun a new type of transformation, or deformation. For several centuries it had developed under the influence of a civilization intellectualized to the point of disillusion. Sophistries of speculation, superstitions of despair had gathered round it. The first were indeed not summed up until early in the sixth century, when the pseudo-Dionysius wrote treatises upon *The Divine Names,* and the *Heavenly Hierarchy* of the angels. They later gathered about the relics of the martyrs, or their images, to which the sad, the puzzled or the sorry took their difficulties hoping to witness a miracle worked in their behalf.

Among the partly Romanized, still scarcely Christianized rural provincials and Italians; among the Germanic invaders, Christianity had now quite another task. Here was no interest in theological subtleties. Arian Christianity appealed to the Teutons, not because it was a heresy sprung from the speculative East, but because it seemed a more comprehensible doctrine. The Burgundian Gundobad replied angrily on one occasion, "Do I not recognize the law of God? But I will not worship *three gods!*"[27] So too the Gallo-Roman farmer, the Gothic hunter, did not speculate as to the origin of evil. They *saw* it in person, the wolf who slunk into the shadows of the woods, an elf with horns just behind the shoulder, the crow perched upon a dead limb waiting to pounce upon their scattered seed.[28]

Miracles grew in number, even more in impressiveness. Now they were worked, not merely to comfort some unfortunate individual, but to prove to the astounded infidel peasantry that the Christian God was more powerful than the spirits who protected their fields, and therefore a Christian priest could do more than any charm of theirs to further the growth of their crops. Rogations were instituted in Gaul, ceremonies in which a portion of one of the Gospels was read at the foot of some splendid tree, probably chosen because sacred by pre-Christian tradition, a procession following about the parish fields during which prayers were chanted for the protection and growth of the crops.[29]

But old beliefs and practices were not easily dislodged. Zealous prelates of Gaul were still energetically trying to stamp them out in the ninth century,[30] but the spirits of earlier devotion, as *fairies,* still for more centuries continued to be present at the birth of children, with gifts of good or evil,[31] and to haunt the bubbling springs, by the side of one of which Joan of Arc had her early visions, calling it, with the other peasants of her village, *La Fontaine-aux-Bonnes-Fées-Notre-Seigneur,* in quaint mixture of a faith then old, and another perhaps thousands of years older.[32]

The secular (*i.e.* nonmonastic) clergy were a problem from the moment a line began to be drawn between monastic and secular

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[27] Quoted by Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* III, 384.

[28] The Devil plays a prominent rôle in the life of Martin of Tour, and of Benedict.

[29] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* II, 498.

[30] Halphen, *Les Barbares,* 74.

[31] Maury, *Croyances et Legendes du Moyen Age,* chap. ii.

[32] Anatole France, *Vie de Jeanne d'Arc,* I, 12.

Christians. Observant monks followed a tradition which looked upon the business of the secular clergy as an interference with the task of obtaining their personal salvation, and there began to be temptations in the path of the secular clergy which made many of them in no haste to become monks. Church property was beginning to accumulate, and might sometimes tend to become the private possession of the priest in whose charge it was.[33] Why not, when the only proper place for him who had abjured private possessions was in a monastery? To assimilate him to monasticism to the extent of shaving the crown of his head [34] did not cut away the vice of avarice, and to forbid his marriage in many canons of many councils and synods did not incapacitate him from begetting children; whereas, as the good Father, Gregory of Nyssa, well knew, nothing tempts more to avarice than having children to provide for.[35] Difficulties with the lower secular clergy were to grow, but for the moment the bishops were a still greater care, since it might now be said, in a sense probably not intended by the author of a New Testament letter ascribed to Paul, that "if anyone reaches after a bishopric he desires a good job." [36]

Everything possible was being done to make some of the bishop's qualifications which follow inappropriate (that, for example, he should be husband of one wife, and have his children in such subjection as befitted his dignity). If attempts were being made to subtract the temptations of a wife, the temptations to avarice were greatly increasing; if the canons allowed no children upon whom to exercise the preservation and manifestation of his dignity, those in subjection might on occasion include an emperor.

In short, the office was one of power enough to try the pride and the capacity of an Ambrose, of influence enough to sometimes put one above the disagreeable consequences of criticism, of wealth enough to exercise hospitality upon an almost princely scale, or feed an avarice not altogether too cheese-paring to consort with dignity.

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[33] "Canons of Synod in Burgundy," 517 (Hefele, III, 286ff.).

[34] Neander, *General History of the Christian Church* (Eng. trans.), III, 106, note.

[35] *On Virginity,* chap. iv.

[36] I Timothy III. 1.

Needless to say there were not a few aspirants who were more aware of these facts than interested in old-fashioned qualifications of the Apostolic Age; of which we are nowhere more reminded than in the pages of a little treatise of Gregory (the first of that name to be Bishop of Rome, and among the Popes known as Gregory the Great) advising as to the proper ideals and conduct of shepherds of the Christian flock (*Regulae pastoralis liber*), the admonitions of which were being recommended to bishops in various reforming councils and synods for several centuries. One quotation will serve as an example of many that might be chosen.

> Since by permission of God all the temporal rulers esteem it an honor to respect religion and to submit to the ecclesiastical powers, it results that many men covet the dignities of the Church to satisfy their ambition, under pretext of a desire to be shepherds of souls.[37]

It would be manifestly unfair to present a catalogue of all the episcopal enormities of the rude centuries of the Dark Ages as a complete picture of bishops of the time, but still more misleading to portray the typical bishop as a saint. The barbarian kings had a very simple theory as to their monarchical power, considering their subjects and their kingdoms as a personal domain. Needless to say they did not hesitate long to take a hand in the election of bishops, so that new elements of intrigue were added to the forces by which men rose to the coveted position. In order to incur and retain favor with these warrior princes of unbridled appetites any episcopal aspirant had to habituate himself to read the ethical admonitions of his Bible with one blinking eye, while the other was steadily fixed upon a very different picture. Best not to read them at all. Since, everything else aside, books were difficult to obtain and troublesome to read.

*"Un personnel très mêlé,"* says Monseigneur Duchesne. *"À côte d'honnêtes gens—que de tristes personnages, ignorants, ivrognes, avares, cruels!"* [38]

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[37] Paragraph 2. This little treatise, really a masterpiece of its kind, is also often known and referred to as The Pastoral of Gregory the Great.

[38] Duchesne, *L'Église au VI$^e$ Siècle,* 526.

The story of two bishops, the brothers Salonius and Sagitarius, which Gregory of Tours recounts, is perhaps not the worst,[39] but has something of the grotesqueness of a parody, and is perhaps as enlightening as any.

"A tumult arose against the bishops Salonius and Sagitarius," so Gregory prefaces his chronicle of these two. Having been brought up by a saintly bishop of Lyons, they became deacons, and very shortly bishops in two minor cities. Once their own masters they abandoned themselves "with mad fury to usurpations, murders, homicides, adulteries and crimes of all sorts." As an example of their escapades he then tells how, when a near-by bishop was having a birthday party, they fell upon him and his guests with an armed band, tore their clothes, killed some servants, carried off the vessels and the provisions for the feast, leaving the bishop himself covered with outrages. A synod was held at Lyons, complaint was brought, the matter was discussed, they were found guilty and it was ordained that they be deprived of their offices.

Salonius and Sagitarius, however, seem to have known where they stood with the king, and obtained permission and assistance from him to appeal to the Bishop of Rome. Presenting a plea that they had been wrongfully deprived of their bishoprics they were reinstated, with the consent of the king. Again they returned to a similiar way of living; between times donning armor and joining in a fray with the Lombards, quite like laymen, says Gregory, and themselves killing a considerable number of the enemy with their own hands.

But another act of brutality stirred up a clamor against them, which came to the ears of the king, who banished them from his presence. They then began to storm against the monarch, and to charge that the monarch's sons were not proper heirs of the kingdom, since their mother had not been his wife; ignorant, says Gregory, of the fact that "in these days one calls every child a prince who is begotten by a king."

In punishment for this slander the king ordered them shut up

[39] One of the *worst* is recounted in IV, ii, of Gregory's *History of the Franks.*

in a monastery for penitence. But his eldest son fell sick, and a servant whispered to him that perhaps the illness was a visitation of God, because of punishment he had inflicted upon two *innocent* men who, as bishops, were under the special protection of the deity; and that it was quite possible that revenge fall upon him in the form of his son's death.

"Go quickly and set them loose, begging them to pray for my children," was the king's anxious response, and here we may leave the tale.[40]

Confirming what has been said above as to the constant necessity of considering politics in studying the Christianity of the fifth and sixth centuries, perhaps the most important political event of these centuries for western Europe was also a religious event: the baptism of Clovis, King of the Franks, which took place just before the end of the fifth century (Christmas, 496).

Of all the barbarian nations which had by this time settled in Europe west of the Rhine the Franks alone had not yet, in the person of their leaders, embraced Christianity. Settled at the north, the Ripuarian Franks to the east of the Rhine about Cologne, the Salic Franks about Tournai, in modern Belgium, these people had come in contact neither with the civilization nor the religion of Constantinople.

Clovis was indeed himself related in lineage to the older religion, his great-grandfather having been a merman attracted by a human queen as she sat upon the beach.[41] The father of Clovis was that Childeric whom Basine had sought as the bravest man she knew. In the three generations from the merman's son to Clovis the Salic Franks had been united under a single king, and had conquered at the death of Clovis about two-thirds of what is now modern France. The largest part by far of this task had been accomplished by Clovis, and in it his conversion played an important part.

The story of this conversion goes back into the annals of the Burgundians, elaborated perhaps in the history of Gregory of

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[40] *History of the Franks,* V, xxi.

[41] This story comes from the pen of an old chronicler, Fredegarius Scholasticus.

Tours.[42] A brother of Gundobad, the Burgundian king, had married a wife untainted by the Arian heresy. Thus it happened that Clotilda, a niece of Gundobad the Arian, had been brought up, though an orphan under her uncle's care, clinging to the Nicene faith.

Rumors of Clotilda's beauty and discretion came to the ears of Clovis, already casting envious eyes upon the rich Burgundian domain. Later legend had it that, owing to a family difference, Gundobad had killed his brother and thrown the mother of Clotila into a pond with a stone tied about her neck, and that when the daughter left to be married she laid waste in revenge the last few miles of Burgundian territory before reaching the borders of the Franks. Whether or not this be true, with the energy evidenced by such a tale Clotilda immediately set to work to convert her husband. Soon bearing him a son she gained permission to have the child baptized. Unfortunately the son died, and Clovis naturally concluded that his baptism was the cause. Nevertheless Clotilda kept both her enthusiasm, and apparently her influence over the king, since a second son was also baptized. Soon after this child was taken sick, and Clovis quite probably said, with vigorous Frankish emphasis, "I told you so!"

This child recovered, and the queen persisted in her attempts to gain her husband. Against her Clovis urged that, were he converted, his companions in arms would repudiate him as a deserter from the gods of his people. However, his covetings have turned toward the rich land of Alsace, held by another Germanic people, the Alemanni, and finding himself in a tight place before battle, like Constantine before him he registered a vow to become a Christian provided the Christian God would give him the upper hand in the awaited fray. So it happened, and when Christmas came, having been in the meantime well instructed in the advantages of the Christian religion by Remi, the Bishop of Rheims, he was baptized in impressive pomp, with three thousand of his principal warriors.[43]

[42] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* III, 360, 412, doubts elements of the story of Clotilda.

[43] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks,* II, xxvii-xxxi.

Having thus become a Christian of the dogmatic brand favored by the bishops and monks of Gaul and Italy, Clovis undermined the position of his Germanic rivals in western Europe, further conquests were facilitated, and the foundation had been laid before his death for the future empire of Charlemagne.

# XXIII

AFTER the short period of Alaric's plundering, followed soon by his death in southern Italy, after a brief pagan reaction in sympathy for a usurper who took the name of Constantine, Rome settled down early in the fifth century to be definitely Christian. Fashionable women and pious senators who had not taken to monasticism evidenced this fact by wearing tunics and togas embroidered or woven with scenes and characters from Scriptural story, sometimes as many as six hundred to a single robe.[1] In 424 Gallia Placidia, daughter of Theodosius, after an eventful career which had taken her to Spain as a Visigothic queen, and had left her at thirty-five twice a widow, also settled down, a pious Christian, to rule the West for a quarter of a century.[2] Compensating for the necessity of accepting the political humiliation of her empire, she might look upon its ecclesiastical brilliance. She established her son at Ravenna and began to deck her capital with ornaments of Christian architecture and art. Ravenna's importance dated from its choice as the new capital of the Western Empire, and unfortunately had no relic to dignify the Basilica of Saint John the Evangelist which Placidia built, but one night when the Augusta and her confessor had prayed long through the dark hours within the precincts of the church the sainted apostle appeared to them a moment. As Placidia rushed forward to embrace his feet St. John vanished, leaving his sandal in her hands. But the sandal proved nearly as difficult to hold as the saint himself. It appears to have been buried in *many* places, but the most substantial memorial of this fleeting visit to his church remained as a festal day which commemorated the event.[3]

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[1] Von Gleichen-Russwurm, *Der Ritterspiegel,* 8-9.

[2] Placidia ruled first as regent for her son, and afterwards continued to be the virtual ruler because he (Valentinian III) proved so profligate and incompetent.

[3] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* I, 452-453.

Before the middle of the fifth century Rome had begun to decline in population,[4] but the episcopal see steadily became richer and more important. Dying Christians were by now expected to leave at least one-tenth of their property to the Church, many were more generous both living and dying. Also the Roman see had fallen heir to most of the secular property taken from the heathen temples,[5] and had become the largest landowner in the empire.[6]

The state was no longer purveyod either of *bread* or *circus-games.*[7] A charitably inclined bishop might even overspend the large episcopal income in feeding the poor,[8] and contests over the election of bishops were about the only bloody popular spectacle which remained.[9]

In 440 however, the first great man to hold this office (Leo the First) was elected, and peaceably it seems. Then almost immediately came to the fore the tremendous issue of *papal supremacy.*

Several different elements combined to give to the see of Rome an importance which had been steadily growing in the West. First of course was the large population and political importance of Rome during the early centuries of the Church. Christianity was planted there early, grew rapidly, and as the Church came more and more to base its organization upon analogies and jurisdictions borrowed from the Empire the prestige of Rome as a center of imperial power affected the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome in ways too many to be recited here. The choice of Constantinople as Constantine's capital might have worked to lessen the power of the Church in Rome, but again for various reasons the effect was rather the opposite. Finally, and what came to count almost more than any as an argument, when forces had drawn together a commanding influence there, Christian tradition was convinced that Peter, one of the Apostles, had founded the Church in Rome, and that Jesus had made the faith of Peter the rock of eternal solidity upon which the Church was to rest.[10]

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[4] Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom,* I, 212. "Man darf behaupten, dass Rom innerhalb fünfundvierzig Jahren, seit der Eroberung durch Alaric, um 150,000, ja vielleicht um eine grössere Zahl der Bewohner ärmer geworden war."

[5] *Ibid.,* I, 173.

[6] *Ibid.,* I, 174.

[7] The Emperor Honorius abolished the games, his sister Placidia was forced to discontinue distribution of grain.

[8] So Gregory the Great is said to have done.

[9] Gregorovius, I, 175; Duchesne, *L'Église au VI<sup>e</sup> Siècle,* chap. iv.

No one had quite dared to claim directly universal jurisdiction for the Bishop of Rome until Leo I seized upon an opportunity to do so upon the comparatively safe ground of a dispute as to jurisdiction between himself and the Metropolitan of Arles (445).

Missionary activities in Gaul had been directed from Rome, centering at Lyons. But the city of Arles, more Roman than Lyons, had gained much prestige, some unfortunately tainted with heresy, and early in the fifth century a Roman bishop had granted a sort of vicarate of Gaul to the Bishop of Arles. This was a wise move, as it at once recognized the growing prestige of this see, and in doing so nailed upon it a placard of Roman supremacy in Gaul. This however the Bishop of Arles in 445 was unwilling to admit. Having disciplined the Bishop of Besançon, and this bishop having appealed to Leo, the Roman bishop reinstated him, rebuked the Bishop of Arles, and definitely claimed, on the basis of Peter's primacy among the Apostles, that the see of Rome was divinely intended to be the head of the universal Christian Church.

But the great contest was not to be with a relatively small prelate like the Metropolitan of Arles. The Bishop of Constantinople was also accumulating power. He was quite willing to see the Bishop of Rome supreme in the West, for he was looking toward a similar situation in the East, against greater difficulties to be sure, since there was, for example, Antioch, rich in memories of the Apostolic Age; to say nothing of Alexandria, or Jerusalem.

The game in Constantinople was not so badly played! In 381, at the important Synod of Constantinople against Arianism, they slipped in a little canon which reads: "The Bishop of Constantinople should have the preëminence of honor after the Bishop of Rome, for that city is the *new Rome.*"[11] It is an apparently harmless little canon, which at once admits to Rome *a preëminence,* while at the same time demolishing the basis upon which alone the see of Rome ever was able to claim *universal supremacy.* It tacitly says, "We accord you honor as an older Church than we, but as for jurisdiction; yours is that of the *old* Rome, ours is that of the *new.*"

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[10] Matthew XVI. 16-19.

[11] Synod of Constantinople (381), Canon III.

But, six years after Leo had humbled the Metropolitan of Arles, clearly claiming universal jurisdiction, a council met to decide a new and knotty question of theology invented in the East. The question was briefly this: could Mary, as a woman, have borne a God? And suddenly came the difficult matter of deciding what sort of a nature Jesus' was, which made it possible for him, a God, to have been born of a woman.

The Council of Calcydon, held in 451, aimed to decide what Christians ought to believe concerning this question, and Leo I had much to do with calling it. Moreover he sent to the council, by his legates, a long letter giving his opinion, and the bishops decided this matter to his general satisfaction. However, when everything seemed over someone suggested, on behalf of the Bishop of Constantinople, another canon which was accepted. This canon said that the Fathers had done well to accord the Roman see the privileges it had, because it was the *imperial city.* Then it went on to cite some privileges accorded the very sacred Church of Constantinople, the *new* imperial city. As for Peter, not a word was said about either him or the rock.[12]

This canon passed, the Council dissolved, after sending a letter to Leo asking his confirmation of its acts. What pains were taken by smooth Byzantines to sugar the pill! "Our mouth is filled with joy, and our tongue with exultation," the letter begins, with a quotation from one of the Psalms.[13] The council had taken him as a guide in their deliberations, had found his letter a regal spiritual feast, tempted to think the celestial bridegroom in their midst. As the head to the limbs of the body, so the legates of Leo had established a hegemony among the members of the assembly. Then at the end:

[12] Council of Calcydon, Canon XXVIII.

[13] Psalm CXXV. 2.

> We point out to you that we have also decreed some other measures in the interest of peace and order in ecclesiastical affairs. . . . Knowing that your Holiness will confirm and approve this also, we have, in particular, confirmed the custom already old, according to which the Bishop of Constantinople is wont to ordain the metropolitans of the dioceses of Asia. . . . To prove that we have acted neither with partiality . . . nor in a spirit of opposition, we make known to you what we have done, that you may confirm and give to it your consent.[14]

This Leo had not the slightest intention of doing. The Bishop of Constantinople should be content to have obtained, with the help of himself (Leo) the bishopric of so important a city. One should not belittle the imperial city, neither could one make of it an *apostolic seat.* As for the canon presumptuously passed: "I nullify it, by virtue of the authority of the holy apostle Peter. . . . As for you (this to the empress) pray restrain my brother, the bishop Anatol, within such limits as will protect him from all danger." [15]

The Pope, for we may now perhaps call him so, did succeed in humbling "his brother the Bishop Anatol," but none the less the canon continued valid in the East, and the Bishop of Constantinople went on accumulating power, subjecting the Patriarch of Antioch, then of Alexandria. Not until 484, not also without a barbarian ruler in Rome having his hand in the matter was the issue forced to the point of the *first open schism* between the churches of Rome and Constantinople.[16]

If the Roman see had risen in power to the point of enunciating under the last weak Roman monarchs, a policy which it had not previously dared openly to declare, with weaker popes than Leo, and stronger *barbarian* rulers in Rome or Ravenna, matters were to be a little different. From the death of Leo (461) the Roman bishop retreated to a more modest political position. His successor spent most of his energy during six years attempting to assert his claim of supremacy, not universally, but in Gaul and

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[14] Hefele, *History of the Councils,* III, 147, 148.

[15] *Ibid.,* III, 148, 149.

[16] This schism lasted until 519. As its first act we see the Bishop of Constantinople, the Roman Bishop's decree of deposition pinned to his back, reading from the sanctuary a decree excommunicating the Bishop of Rome.

Spain, and the next pope saw the last of the Western emperors deposed, and barbarians ruling in Rome. The sixth century saw the Merovingian kings establishing their monarchy in Gaul, exercising more and more influence over the choice of bishops and paying small attention to the pope. In 493 Theodoric the Ostrogoth entered Ravenna to reign thirty-three years. His attitude toward the aspiring popes may be illustrated by an incident.

> In the spring of the year 526, the pope John . . . betook himself to Constantinople. This was the first time that the pontiff of old Rome had appeared in the capital of the Eastern Empire. He did not go of his own accord. . . . He whose dignity had always retained him at Rome, who had not budged from there for any of the great councils of the East, was dispatched with great haste and no ceremony to the Byzantine capital by the caprice of a barbarian king.[17]

The purpose of his mission could hardly have pleased him, since it was the incongruous one of insisting, on behalf of the Arian Theodoric, that Justinian return property he had confiscated from Arian Christians, and that those converted to the pope's own orthodoxy by the persecution of Justinian be *reconverted* to their heretical faith. Pretty errand for the arch-defender of Athanasian orthodoxy! But this was not to be all of the pope's humiliation. He succeeded but in the former half of his charge. Justinian would grant the restitution of property if the Roman Pontiff would consent to crown him, as already the Patriarch of Constantinople had done. The reconversion was denied. This but partial accomplishment displeased Theodoric, who in consequence put the pope in prison on his return, where not many days after his confinement he died.

Less than four months later Theodoric himself died, and soon his weaker successor was again sending off another pope to Constantinople, this time upon a purely political errand. Then came a period of schism at Rome, during which two popes in succession attempted to name their successors, causing a period of papal unrest; and an attempt to reform the simony which had been growing rapidly. But from Rome it will be more interesting to turn our attention to the theatrical reign of Justinian in the East.

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[17] Duchesne, *L'Église au VI^e^ Siècle,* 74-77.

During the fifth century the Roman and the Byzantine civilizations had grown farther and farther apart, with this result, among others, that in the East the Oriental aspect of civilization became more pronounced. This tendency was on the whole encouraged by Christians in the East, because of those pagan traditions which were behind the remnants of Hellenistic culture.[18] Toward the end of the fifth century, however, affairs began to go worse in the Byzantine Empire, and in the midst of calamities both public and private the government became increasingly unpopular, with the result that old ideas of the former grandeur of Rome turned the thoughts of the people again toward the Eternal City. At the same time a violent opposition to the government arose among important ecclesiastical elements of the population, sympathetic to the orthodoxy of the West. In the midst of disorders and discontent so occasioned, an obscure intrigue brought to the throne in 518 an upstart general, brave and competent in war, but uneducated to the point of being unable to read, and innocent of knowledge either as to social amenities of political diplomacy. To advise him in such matters this emperor (Justin) called to his side his nephew, Justinian, who had previously, as a youth, been summoned to Constantinople by the emperor, to be educated there. Even before the death of Justin, this Justinian was associated with him in the imperial power and designated by him as his successor.

But the rise of Justinian's wife and co-sovereign was even more dramatic. Before her elevation through marriage to Justinian her experience had apparently been such as to have rendered her an able instructress of the lowest dancer in the most disreputable Parisian *boîte de nuit*.[19] She had been born in the circus, the two factions of which were at the time important elements in the incessant political turmoil; and she had been trained in all the vilest arts of the dancer and courtesan, among whom she is said to have attained, "in the eyes of all men the primacy."[20] One whose hatred of her mounted to the degree of an obsession might still say of her that she was beautiful of face and figure, fresh of coloring and quick to pale, witty and agreeable, possessor of an always lively and piercing eye.[21] That she was able to manage Justinian is in many places evident. If unable otherwise to persuade him to do what she wanted, she aroused hope in him of "drawing rich profit from the act she advised."[22] Her intelligence was unusual, her force, energy, courage, clarity and prudence of political vision were probably superior to his, and her death made itself felt in a decline in the firmness and brilliance of Justinian's reign.

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[18] Diehl, *Histoire de L'Empire Byzantin,* 17, 18.

[19] We are indebted for facts as to Theodora's early life almost entirely to Procopius, a contemporary historian excellently placed to know. The hatred of Procopius, both for Justinian and Theodora, are such that he is used with caution, and later historians have varying opinions as to his reliability. Some facts may be due to gossip, but facts as to her birth have corroboration, and in a chronicle written by Procopius he has been found reliable.

When the eyes of Justinian fastened themselves upon her, her rise was rapid. He determined to marry her, and that he might do so she was made a patrician. Then, three days before Easter, despite the fact that it was a period during which custom frowned even upon the exchange of polite visits,[25] Justinian and Theodora were raised to the purple of empire, she beside him not as consort merely, but as *Empress-Regnant,* cosovereign.

To a considerable degree she made her conduct appropriate to her position, refraining from open disreputable alliances. None of the clergy showed themselves moved to virtuous indignation. On the contrary, says Procopius, they hastened to salute her with the name of Mistress.[26] Pride to a degree appears to have taken the place of lust as her dominant passion, and her woman's emotions were to a degree assuaged by pious admiration of the austerities of ascetic monks. She became very religious, and entertained herself with devotion.[27]

Justinian also was religious, but in this different way that he

[20] Procopius, *Anecdota,* X, 8 (the work referred to in the preceding note).

[21] *Ibid.,* various references in book ix.

[22] *Ibid.,* XIII, 5.

[25] *Ibid.,* X, 4.

[26] *Ibid.,* X, 6.

[27] "C'était la grande protectrice des saints moines d'Orient dont l'ascese formidables et voyante l'impressionnait beaucoup." Duchesne, *L'Église au VI^e Siècle,* 80.

interested himself more in the ecclesiastical organization, and preened himself upon his theological learning and acumen. In various theological matters Theodora and Justinian did not agree. The particular heresy that troubled the East at this time was the one resulting from attempts to define the nature of a Christ who was at once both God and Man, and in its broadest nomenclature is termed the Monophysite Controversy. Theodora cared possibly little about the theological point involved, but she was impressed by the austerities and wonders of some heretical monks, expelled from Palestine, who were given refuge in a palace not far from that of the emperor. She visted them often, and protected them against punishment, even when one of them went so far as to smash with his staff and throw into the fire a statue of Justinian, a crime which might have brought the death penalty.[28]

Next she spread her protection over a certain Anthimus, by title Bishop of Trebizond, but resident in Constantinople, and held in great veneration by Theodora for his ascetic practices. Anthimus was suspect of heresy, being in close relationship with the heretic monophysite monks. None the less, the see of Constantinople falling vacant, Anthimus was elevated to the position of Patriarch of Constantinople. The Patriarch of Antioch hastened to Rome to tell the Pope what had happened, and Justinian, about to undertake a military campaign against the West, was little desirous of incurring hostility with the Roman ecclesiastical powers. Definite and embarrassing theological questions were asked of Anthimus, who avowed his heresy, laid down his vestments of office and disappeared. Where? Theodora found him a hiding place in her palace, and there he lived until her death, twelve years later.

But it is impossible here to follow the twisted strands of ecclesiastical intrigue and controversy centering in Constantinople during the sixth century.[29] They were not soon to end, but rather a schismatic Christian organization was to arise and persist even until to-day in Palestine, Syria, and east to Persia. In the meantime, however, the seventh century was to see the rise of a new religion from a seed sown to the south in Arabia, which, among its other effects, was to confine and concentrate the ingrowing cynicisms and intrigues of the Byzantine secular and religious dignitaries.

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[28] *Ibid.*, 82.

[29] The third chapter of Duchesne's book quoted above, entitled "Les Protégés de Theodora" is a reliable and readable account of the religious situation in the empire of Justinian.

Thinking of the Arabian prophet, dreaming dreams in a shop, or plodding with a slow moving caravan across a waste of desert, one is reminded of the Prophet of Nazareth, and of how far we seem to have wandered from the dreams he dreamed along the roads and among the fields of his little Galilee.

It would be difficult to find him anywhere among the general tendencies of Christianity in these centuries, and it is only general tendencies which leave appreciable marks for history to study.

If we looked in Byzantine art we would find, as at the church of St. Vitalis of Ravenna, the figure of a lamb, backed by a cross of St. Andrew, and supported by four angels; the prefigured victim of an atoning sacrifice; this in the vaulting of the choir. In the vaulting of the apse we would see a risen Christ, throned in glory and seated upon the orb of the world.[30] We would not find the Nazarene Prophet.

Seek him at Rome and you will be likely to find someone who covets a "filing" from a link of the chains which bound the apostle Peter, that this filing might be incorporated in a tiny key and worn about his neck to "sanctify" him.[31] Seek him, not even as a prophet, but as a *savior,* and you may witness instead, the Roman citizenry in procession to the church of the Virgin Mary, calling not upon her son, but her, to save them from the plague.[32] Or again you may hear a Roman pontiff thunder:

> If anyone shall not confess that the Word was made flesh, his divine nature unalterably conserved, his human nature united with it in substance from the very moment of conception, from the womb of the Virgin; but holds on the contrary the Divine Word to have been united with a

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[30] Brehier, *L'Art Chrétien,* 116.
[31] Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom,* II, 75.
[32] *Ibid.,* II, 72.

pre-existent man; and that for this reason the blessed Virgin is not to be thought to be truly the mother of God, but only called so in a sense, let him be anathema.[33]

Seek him in Gaul—But why seek him in Gaul when Martin of Tours is nearer, and one needed but to go fishing in the Loire, invoke that saint while casting in his net and prove the power of the saints of God by hauling in a marvelous draught of fish; or when, if returning home a little drunk after dining out one fell over a precipice, the gasped name of the holy Martin might land one at the bottom of the cliff without injury more serious than a bruised foot? [34]

Let us say that we speak of a Christianity some six hundred years old. Judged by such footprints, that tell us what men in those times had made of it, its success will not appear brilliant. The smiling sunlight of the Olympian Gods, the majestic beneficence of the Zeus of Phidias, the dignity of taut-willed Stoicism aiming at self-sufficiency, these things seem clear and civilized beside the general atmosphere of light and shade surrounding Christianity at the time of Mahomet's birth. Yet it cannot be denied against the facts that the European world—in a sense modified from century to century (not by doctrinal definition, but in the vague groping of the mass for the salvation nearest at hand to meet the ills of their particular generation, during which individuals might explore many bypaths leading from the general highway direction)—had chosen, in so far as human beings in the mass ever freely choose, this Jesus of Nazareth to be their Savior.

Many tragic events, many lost illusions, the accession too of new elements of still semibarbaric energy and force of will, had marked these six centuries, and had gone to delineate the form of the last of them. But our question is, had the Prophet of Nazareth left his mark?

The answer to this question is neither easy nor simple; an adequate answer could not be brief. But by setting down for comparison two short passages, one from the polished pagan Stoic Seneca, the other from the outstanding Christian genius of the early seventh century, Gregory the Great, we may, some of us, note a subtle difference of attitude and reaction in two men whose lives are comparable as any we may readily find. Both were born as natural inheritors of public careers, and early wished to renounce them for ascetic lives. Both found themselves nevertheless plunged into great responsibilities of public business. Both were conversant with many ugly facts, listened to many secrets that betrayed the degradations of ambition, avarice and lust. Both knew what it was to be rich, Gregory having been first born so, and later as pope having the care of new riches thrust upon him, when he had renounced his private fortune. Both knew compromise with what they considered evil, and both sought finally, in the midst of worldly responsibilities and not in the cloistered lives they both would have preferred, to lead what they considered noble and virtuous lives.

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[33] One of the five *additional anathemas* from the *Constitutum* of the Pope Vigilius. Hefele, *History of the Councils,* III, 500.

[34] Two miracles of Martin of Tours, recounted by Gregory of Tours in his *Seven Books of Miracles,* III, 20; IV, 16.

First then from Seneca:

> Some are perpetually shifting from one thing to another; others, again, make their whole life but a kind of uneasy sleep: some lie tossing and turning until very weariness brings them to rest; others, again, I cannot so properly call inconstant as lazy. There are many properties and diversities of vice but it is one never-failing effect of it to live displeased. We do all of us labor under inordinate desires; we are either timorous and dare not venture, or venturing we do not succeed or else we cast ourselves upon uncertain hopes, where we are perpetually solicitous and in suspense. In this distraction we are apt to propose to ourselves things dishonest and hard; and when we have taken great pains to no purpose, we come then to repent of our undertakings; we are afraid to go on, and we can neither master our appetites nor obey them: we live and die restless and irresolute; and, in which is worst of all, when we grow weary of the public, and betake ourselves to solitude for relief, our minds are sick and wallowing, and the very house and walls are troublesome to us we grow impatient and ashamed of ourselves, and suppress our inward vexation until it breaks our heart for want of vent.[35]

Seneca is seeking a foundation upon which to build up peace of mind.[36] Passions are disturbers, and life is for the sage a continual battle against the waverings they cause. The implied goal is a measure of impassivity. The ideal sage would move among mortality untouched by its uneasiness, looking with a sort of pity upon the still continuing struggles of weaker men. Listen now to Gregory:

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[35] *Of a Happy Life,* chap. ix.

> Sometimes while we are congratulating ourselves that we do everything with grave deliberation some piece of chance takes us in the nick, and we are carried off with a sudden precipitancy; and we, who believed ourselves always to have lived by method, are in a moment laid waste with an inward confusion. Yet by the discipline of this very confusion we learn *not to attribute our counsels to our own powers;* and we hold to gravity with the more matured endeavors, in that we return to the same as if once lost. . . . Sometimes whilst we are congratulating ourselves that we know great things, we are stunned with a blindness of instantaneous ignorance. But in so far as the eye of the mind is for a moment closed by ignorance, it is afterwards the more really opened to admit knowledge, in that having been instructed by the stroke of its blindness, it may also know *from whom it has its very knowing.* . . . When we congratulate ourselves that we have in abundant measure the bowels of pious tenderness, we are struck with a sudden fit of hardness of heart. But when thus as it were hardened, we learn *to whom to ascribe the good dispositions of piety* which we have; and the piety, which has been in a manner extinguished, is recovered with more reality, seeing that it is loved with fuller affections as having been lost. . . . For a person would count himself possessed of great powers indeed, if he never at any time within the depths of his mind felt the failure of any of them.[37]

The keynote of the attitude here expressed is humility. The goal of the endeavor indicated is not envisioned in the human individual, be he sage or saint, but in God. The mystic might aim to incorporate it in a human saint, but only by an implied union of the saint with God in which the protectors of Christian doctrine were always quick to discover heresy.[38] But if, abstracting the passages of religious reference (italicized that this may the more easily be done), we ask the practical result of this humility on human reactions, we find it giving here an exultation to hope, while at the same time tempering it with intermittent caution, and that it made the moments of despair not so much sloughs of despondency as relaxed preparation for a more mature, even a more joyous regrasping of the positive moral task dropped in failure for a little time.

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[36] *Ibid.,* chap. iv.

[37] From a treatise on Christian morals, in the form of a commentary on the Book of Job. Abstracted from book ii, secs. 78, 79.

[38] Two striking examples are Scotus Erigena and Meister Eckhart.

"Our houses are on fire, our country invaded, our goods taken away, our children in danger. . . . Misfortunes cannot be avoided, but they may be sweetened, if not overcome."[39] An armor against despair, such a passage from Seneca; no foundation for a new civilization! In Gregory's time the future must have looked less promising even than that of Nero and Seneca. Nevertheless, and despite the burden of care which can be felt underneath the long passage whence we have taken a few sentences from the pen of the first monk to be chosen (sincerely against his will) as pope, one senses the memory and consciousness of something more positive than consolation, a pervasive undercurrent of that *joy* and *rejoicing* of which the letters of the converted Paul are full.

The assurance of having been called to the side of God is to be sure always very near to that of being assured that God has been called to our side, and in the name of the subtle difference which lies between these two assurances many enormities have been committed with confident zeal. There is no doubt, however, but that either conviction is a powerful energizer, whether in Christianity or any other religion; as we shall see in turning some moments to that other prophetic religion, arisen in the seventh century, and destined to affect for several centuries the story of Christianity.

If the question of the personality of Jesus and the events of his life are surrounded with difficulties of elucidation and problems some of them essentially insoluble, Mahomet's character and early life are in some respects even more a puzzle. Between his death and the publication of his first known biography a period elapsed almost four times as long as that between the death of Jesus and the prevalent dating of the earliest Gospel narrative.[40] On the other hand Mahomet is, in a sense that Jesus is not, an historical character. His religion did not arise after his death, but on the contrary had taken form and begun its achievement during his lifetime, and it was not the memory of him, with its aura of accumulating legend, but the actual policy and deeds of the Prophet which gave it its form.

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[39] Seneca, *On A Happy Life,* iv.

This is not however to deny that legend threw its magic cloak about him, shrouding the inward workings of his consciousness in a mystery which the Koran, though much of it his own work and all purporting to be so, elucidates less than do the four Gospels the personality of Jesus.

Here is a brief portrait of the Prophet brooding over his still unenunciated message, from the pen of an apologist of recent date:

> At the dawn of the seventh century of the Christian era, in the streets of Mecca might often be seen a quiet thoughtful man, past the meridian of life, his Arab mantle thrown across his shoulders, his *tailasan* [41] drawn low over his face; sometimes gently sauntering, sometimes hurrying along, heedless of the passers-by, heedless of the gay scenes around him, deeply absorbed in his own thoughts—yet withal never forgetful to return the salutation of the lowliest, or to speak a kindly word to the children who loved to throng around him. This is *al-Amin,* "the Trusty." He has so honorably and industriously walked through life, that he has won for himself from his compatriots the noble designation of the true and trusty.[42]

If we look for his personality to be elucidated by reading the Koran, we find an orderless collection of law, ethical injunction, apologetic self-defense, theology of the simplest monotheistic type, in which complex humanity is dwarfed before the immensity of the material creation,[43] prophetic utterance. We may indeed glimpse

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[40] Margoliouth, article "Muhammad" in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics,* dates this work 754-775.

[41] "A scarf thrown over the head usually covering the turban, and brought round under the chin and passed over the left shoulder."

[42] Ameer Ali Syed, *The Spirit of Islam,* Introd. xvii.

[43] "The creation of the sky and earth is a thing of more grandure than the creation of the human race; but this the greater part of mankind does not know." Koran, xl, 59.

Mahomet in prophetic trance, sweating under a heavy blanket to a weakness in which consciousness becomes attentuated:

> Oh Prophet, enveloped in your cloak,
> Stand upright in prayer all the night, or a little less
> Than its half; here shorten a little,
> Or there add to the half, to chant the Koran,
> For we are about to reveal to you weighty words.[44]

But if we seek him in action we seem to find a very pragmatic prophet. At one time, refuged in Christian Abyssinia, he seems to have granted, as to Jesus, all that the Abyssinians would have been greatly interested that he should grant; then, eager to return to Mecca, he was apparently willing to retract his condemnation of the 360 idols surrounding the *black stone,* the great god Hobal, soon again recanting his recantation. At Medina he seems at first to have been willing to be *almost* a Jew, until he learned that with the Jews, uncompromising in religion, an almost was hardly better than nothing. Short of the means of materially sustaining his followers he adopted the policy of attacking caravans, and when these began to protect themselves against his bands he formed the astute project of sending a small number with sealed orders to attack a particularly rich one, at a time when it would believe itself protected by a religious taboo.

It was perhaps in these marauding adventures, military to this extent that the caravans were generally from Mecca, and Mecca was still hostile to him and his religion, that he discovered, and doubtless developed and made evident to his followers, his military genius, which made of his religion, almost within his lifetime, an empire.

To a degree tolerant in religion, necessarily so since admissions that both Moses and "the son of Mary" were, like Mahomet himself, prophets, had early found place in the Koran; preserving also something of the nomad Arab's chivalric conceptions of hospitality, the human race was nevertheless soon divided between believers and unbelievers. The *unbeliever* was not only legitimate but religiously enjoined prey. Unity of faith was a political bond, and it was forbidden to question the ground or motive of conversion.

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[44] Koran, lxxiii, 1-5.

*Islam,* "the submission," the forgetfulness of one's self and the flattening out of all rivalries and jealousies; this leveling slogan, having become the name of a new united people, welded them together; small nomad bands of patriarchal organization, cunning Arab merchants, individualistic Semitic agriculturists, given to a hundred idolatric and fetishistic cults, touched by many of the more speculative religious tendencies of Christianity, Judaism, Gnosticism, Manichæism. In contrast to the sometimes zigzag, sometimes sinuous course of Christian development, Islam rose swift and straight, submissive to the will of Allah and the word of his prophet Mahomet. More than forty years of age when first he became a public character the Prophet lived some twenty years afterwards, and before his death the religion had substantially covered the Arabian Peninsula. Then quickly, a sweeping tide of warlike zealots engulfed Palestine and Syria, Asia Minor and Persia, Egypt and the northern shore of Africa, penetrated central Asia, frightened the Byzantine Empire, invaded Gaul, entering further and further until turned back by the army of Charles the Hammer, clear in the center of what is now modern France, a few miles south of Poitiers, holding, behind the barrier of the Pyrenees, the greater part of Spain for several centuries.

Islam, as a religion, little affected Christianity. In so far as it did so it was chiefly by cutting away at its borders, amputating some diseased limbs, inflicted with divisions and heresies, turned back by image worship and the cult of relics to a kind of idolatry; and moreover lying outside Europe, and thus to the side of our story. It was rather as an empire that Islam, first the Arabs, then the Turks, played a part in the history of Christianity. So we may leave it, at the beginning of its conquests, with this brief preparation for our meetings with it later on in our story.

# XXIV

The baptized Clovis was not tardy in proving his usefulness to the Christianity of the monks and bishops of Gaul. It was a grievous thing to him that so many desirable portions of the Gallic provinces should be held by Arians,[1] and before his death he had wrested from the heretical Visigoths the fair lands of Aquitaine. In the meantime he too found a use for the Church which grew into a sort of custom of the Frankish monarchs. In conquering rival petty kings of the Salian Franks he hit upon the new expedient of divesting them of the long locks, without which they could not among their people be respected as princes, and making clerics of them. But death was after all the safest silencer of rival princes, and Clovis so little neglected the radical method of lopping off branches of his family tree which might grow into seditious sprouts[2] that he later lamented the fact that there were left alive none of his kindred who could help him should adversity fall his way. But this lament was less a monentary failure of nerve than it might seem to be, since the historian who recounts it explains that it was an expedient by which he hoped to learn whether there were still alive some relative whom he had overlooked.[3]

A scoundrel, but a successful scoundrel, and the first of a long line of "the most Christian kings of Francia"[4] under whom both monks and secular clergy waxed rich in lands with peasantry to work them, the Arian was driven from his last strongholds in western Europe, and the Christianity of Rome penetrated, under the protection of Frankish weapons, further than Roman power had ever succeeded in extending beyond the Rhine.

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[1] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* VII, 7, who quotes from Clovis' address to his warriors before undertaking his campaign against the Visigoths.

[2] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks,* II, xli.

[3] *Ibid.,* II, xlii.

[4] So Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* VII, 10, sums up the career of Clovis.

The seventh century saw the mission of a second notable Augustine to Britain, and the planting there of a rich monastic life, which in its ripeness was to return an intellectually fertilizing stream to the Continent in the time of Charlemagne. But earlier than this, before the middle of the eighth century England sent a good Saxon son, from Devonshire, who had at Rome changed his name from Winifred to Bonifatius (Boniface) with letters from the pope appointing him "Bishop to the Infidels" beyond the Rhine, and another from the Frankish *major-domo,* Charles the Hammer (Charles Martel) warning all the "bishops, dukes, counts, vicars, lesser officers, agents and friends" of those countries that this Boniface was under the protection of him who was the virtual ruler of the Franks.

To these missionary accomplishments in Britain and Germany we shall return a little later, sojourning still a time among the Franks in Gaul, where first can be seen the development of the feudal system, not less important for the spread of churchly power than for all other aspects of European history for several centuries to come.

Feudalism, with all the varied aspects and institutions it evolved in the Europe of the Middle Ages, has its basis in the tenure of landed property. Its full development as a social-political frame demands an apportionment of political sovereignty coordinated to the ownership-control of land. This is the germinating point from which all its institutional forms evolve. Political sovereignty exercised by an individual on the grounds of personal prestige or military prowess, or delegated to an individual or a class by the customary or legal habits of a people conscious of common race or civilization, is no essential part of the feudal system. Under it, the terms of land tenure fulfilled upon his part, an alien may exercise sovereignty unquestioned on the ground of birth, language or social custom. Where property rights pass by inheritance from generation to generation within a single family, a feeling of loyalty to such a ruling family inevitably grows, but the line of heritage may be broken, peaceably by barter, dower or gift, it may be violently ruptured by forcible seizure, without disturbance to the system.

In a very true sense such a social system marks a point midway between a socially disordered situation, where political sovereignty lies loose, for the grasping of anyone strong enough to seize and hold it, and a long-standing condition of social stability where widespread confidence in and consciousness of common habit and customary law rest the true sovereignty, whatever the form in which it is exercised, upon the conservating force of the commonly accepted traditions.

In theory the rulers are landlords, exercising their rights over their property. Their obligations to those they rule are contractual in nature, whether the contract be implied in long-established custom or specifically stated in some sort of document which may in legal parlance be properly termed a lease. They exercise, in short, neither an arbitrary nor a delegated power.

All the political relationships which such a system establishes are peculiarly personal. Not only are all the reins of political control gathered together in the hands of a single person, but there can scarcely be said to be any general political relationship between the ruler and a mass of subjects. Each tenantry, every individual manor, may have its own prescriptive rights, even its own specific written contractual obligations. So each and every subject of the ruling lord is bound specifically, uniquely, and personally to him.

The legal basis of the feudal system was already established in Roman law while a different theory of political sovereignty still existed.[5] The enforced economic self-sufficiency of immense landed estates, caused by the weakening of Rome's political hold upon its widespread territories and the economic anarchy resulting from grave financial disorders and growing commercial dissolution, thrust into the hands of landlords a measure of political administrative authority at a time when true political sovereignty was still a thing to be fought for and held by armed force. To trace even the landmarks of this development lies in the main aside from our story, but an understanding of the basic principles and generating motor ideas of feudalism is necessary, in order that we may realize how inevitably, having once become owners of landed properties, ecclesiastical institutions came to exercise political sovereignty under the feudal system.

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[5] For the basis of Feudalism in Roman Law, see Fustel de Coulanges, *Les Origines du Système Feodal,* a volume of his unfinished *Histoire des Institutions Politiques de l'Ancienne France.*

The accumulation of such property by monastic communities and episcopal jurisdictions during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries must have gone on at an accelerated pace. We have spoken of the many *gifts* to such institutions. During these troubled times another custom arose, the purpose of which lay less in pious generosity than in the instinct of self-protection.

During the period when repeated waves of invasion swept the country, the barbarian leaders might be counted on to have some measure of respect for the quasi-sacrosanct property of a religious institution. Some might dare to set foot within the mystic circle and lay violent hands upon it, but the chances of ecclesiastical property were decidedly better than those of property in the hands of a poor independent owner. Even after barbarian kings had set up a measure of territorial authority, the protection of law was little more than the personal protection of the monarch. For example, the law of the Ripuarian Franks provides particular and identical penalties for the killing of kingsmen and churchmen; of women under the king's protection and under Church protection.[6] The obtaining of justice was almost entirely a question of reaching the ear of the king, again accessible most readily of all to kingsmen and churchmen.

Roman law provided a way of obtaining the protection of the Church for one's property while still retaining a *precarious* hold upon it for oneself, dating from a time when the Roman State had vast territories of public land upon which it desired to settle colonists. Tracts of land were handed over to powerful senators often, who in turn handed it over to colonists, not however to own, but to *use* during the good pleasure of the owner. Such a tenancy was called a *precarium,* because in theory it arose not from a contract by which a tenant was, for a certain consideration, given certain guaranteed rights over the land; but it was given in answer to a request (*precarius*) of the tenant, and given freely by the owner to one who occupied without lease and cultivated without guarantee of continued possession.

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[6] *Lex Ripuariorum* (ed. Eccardi), Cap. IX, X, XIV. For example (xiv), "Si quis feminam regiam aut ecclesiasticam parientem interfecerit, etc."

Helpless before invaders, or later against powerful neighbors, a petty property owner might avail himself of this principle of law in a process described by Fustel de Coulanges as follows:

> A small peasant landowner who for some reason required the protection of some more powerful person went to him and asked it, not for himself only, but even more for his land. The powerful person probably replied, that he could not protect what was not his. Then the peasant gave over his land, as a free gift or perhaps by sale . . . actually a fiction, since the seller did not receive a single cent.[7]

Having done this the peasant continued to occupy the land, but only by favor of the one whose protection he had procured. As a matter of fact he continued to pay during his lifetime, in most cases, a small yearly rental to the owner, and the tenancy died with him in form, being revived for his heirs only by payment—usually during the five or six years subsequent to his death—of a considerable sum.[8]

By gift and such transactions as the above the secular and monastic corporations of the Church, before the distinctively medieval institutions had completely developed, had become proprietors of a large part of the land. In France the Church was said to have held up to one third of the land. Perhaps the most instructive bit of evidence is a classification of clergy into three categories according to wealth, made at the beginning of the ninth century. Those with from three thousand to eight thousand manors were classed as rich, from one thousand to two thousand was medium, from two hundred to three hundred was poor.[9]

These properties were, of course, not situated in a contiguous block, but might be broadly scattered, so that a prelate proprietor exercised proprietary jurisdiction in a multiplicity of places at the same time. From this it was but a step, in analogy to the lay lords, for a single prelate to hold at the same time a multiplicity of prelacies. For, in the manner of feudalism, clerical offices became easily *benefices,* the enjoyment of the income of certain properties, and canon law defined a benefice in such a way as to show that, among the duties because of the performance of which a benefice was in theory bestowed upon a cleric, the cure of souls was not necessarily to be counted. It was indeed long before it seemed particularly to shock anyone that an archbishop, for example, should also be in title and revenue several times a bishop, perhaps a dozen times an abbot, similarly to the way in which secular lords of the higher ranks were possessed of several subsidiary titles.

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[7] *Les Origines du Système Feodal,* 103-104.

[8] "Carta traditionis monasterio in precaria," and "Carta repraestationis a monasterio in precaria," in ed. Eccardi, *Leges Francorum,* etc., 233.

[9] Thompson, *Feudal Germany,* 17-18.

The other side of this same picture was the appointment of lay persons to ecclesiastical office, that they might enjoy the revenues. Charles the Hammer, busy making friends for himself, bought their loyalty freely with church benefices. His nephew received three bishoprics, Paris, Rouen and Bayeux, together with three of the rich and important abbeys. Another faithful companion in arms received the bishoprics of Trèves and Rheims, of which he managed to spend the entire incomes, so that the officiating clergy were forced to go into trade to live.[10]

In such a situation one does not wonder that the conduct of ecclesiastics and lay dignitaries did not greatly differ. Bishops and abbots went to war, and spent their leisure hunting. They raised horses, hounds and falcons, as proud of their stables or kennels as an English fox-hunting lord.[11]

The lower clergy were limited to the less costly pastimes of gluttony, drunkenness and the maintaining of concubines. Nevertheless not a few well-intentioned priests preferred to marry openly, and there had grown to be such haziness concerning what cleric might and what was forbidden to marry that Pepin wrote to the pope to learn authoritatively which of the clerical grades were prohibited to marry. Against attempts to enforce celibacy many clerics insisted upon their right to marry, and were so far upheld by their parishioners that, driven from their parishes, they continued to exercise priestly functions in hiding, concealed by their people from the ecclesiastical authorities.[12]

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[10] Lavisse, *Histoire de France,* II, 267-268.

[11] See Canons and accounts of reforming synods among Franks in 744 and 747. Hefele, *History of the Councils,* IV.

In the measures of reform undertaken by Pepin, when he had put himself upon the side of the pope, one sees that what appears as a general dissolution of clerical consistency was in part the natural confusion between the function of laity and clerics due to the proprietary basis of the emerging feudalism. It has been said in a previous chapter[13] that Augustine's thought definitely put the organized Christian Church into the processes of European history.[14] In the conception of Augustine, however, ecclesiastical and secular society are two separate worlds, two *cities* with different and irreconcilable ends. The feudal system worked unquestionably to overturn, or at least to disturb the equilibrium of this element of Augustine's conception, so confounding the functions and interests of Church and State that, until some new theory of society was established the contest for temporal supremacy was unavoidable.

When the Lombard invasions (568-572) ended in the setting up of a Lombard kingdom in Italy the arm of papal temporal aspirations was shortened, and they turned to the Frankish monarchs a very friendly countenance, hoping to find assistance there, among these very Christian kings, against the Arian Lombards. For effectual assistance they had to wait two centuries, shocked meanwhile into more affectionate feelings toward a recent convert, the Bavarian monarch, when Charles the Hammer, having given away to his friends as much of his own lands as he thought prudent, began to lay hands upon ecclesiastical properties for the continuance of his largess.

Moreover Church lands were not at all for that reason *papal* lands. Episcopal lands were in the hands of the respective bishops, monastic lands in the hands of the abbots, always and absolutely so according to the Benedictine Rule. The prelates were petty feudal princes. The pope could not aspire to be less, from the feudal standpoint, than an emperor. The pope had no considerable army, his temporal sway was hampered by the Lombard dukes; but he had an able and aspiring chancery when his aspirations might ripen and take form. So they did, apparently in the middle of the eighth century, in a most impressive forgery: a pretended Edict of Constantine, granting to "Pope" Sylvester (a Bishop of Rome who doubtless never dreamed of universal spiritual dominion even) Rome, Italy entire, with all the Western provinces. In this edict Constantine declares his intention to retire to the East and found a new capital there, since "where the celestial emperor has established the prince of priests and head of the Christian religion, it is not proper that a terrestrial emperor should retain power."[15]

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[12] Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy,* I, 150, and chap. ix *passim.*

[13] Chapter XIX.

[14] It is interesting in this entire connection to note that Charlemagne, in his reforms, was a continual student of Augustine's *City of God.*

This forged edict, known as the *Donation of Constantine,* like so many other unfoldings of papal diplomacy, was prepared well beforehand. No serious claims were for some time to be based upon it, and it was but the marking of the logical place of the papacy when once the prelates began to be, in their respective grades, princes according to the basis of princely power in the developed feudal system. Though the papacy had waxed strong through the weakness of the late Merovingian rulers, and however much the rising Carolingian dynasty might owe the pope, as having salved the conscience of Pepin when he decided to be King of the Franks in title as well as in actual power, no pope was rash enough to suggest that the strong and ambitious early Carolingians should, after the example of Constantine, as his *Donation* portrays him, retire to the wastes of Russia or somewhere else beyond the sphere of papal influence, that Peter's temporal successor might bear undivided sway from Rome, over Italy and all the western portion of what had been the Roman Empire. But there the document was, apparently from a time when the weakness of secular monarchs in Gaul and Spain gave strong medicine of dreams to popes and papal secretaries, when another period of formal schism left the Roman bishop no ecclesiastical rival in Constantinople, when too, perhaps, the success of Islam and the leaders upon whose shoulders had fallen the prophet's mantle of Mahomet, showed how effectively such a mantle might become the general of a conquering army, at once the head of a religious community and the ruler of a secular empire.

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[15] So reads the conclusion of this astounding bit of diplomatic fiction.

One may imagine its penning by some cleric of the papal chancery who loved to think of himself as riding on his splendid horse like a senator of the time of Constantine, "with saddle cloths and harness-trappings of the purest white" and shoes of white upon his feet.[16] Nevertheless the document's almost fantastic absurdities, its palpable anachronisms seem to have troubled no one. In a propitious moment it stalked from hiding to grow in influence, as we shall see, and it remained for Laurentius Valla, in the middle of the fifteenth century, and then at risk of his life, to expose sufficiently its absurdity to set scholars on the track of unmasking its pretensions.[17]

While it has been said that the feudal system caused a natural confusion between the aims of secular and religious institutions by confounding their interests, the influence of the Germanic peoples themselves, the Franks particularly, upon Christianity should not be overlooked.

For one thing, it was long before these men of war felt drawn to the monastic ideal into which the energy of the Christian striving for salvation poured itself as the empire declined. One must have inherited the *Weltschmerz* of a decaying civilization to feel, over and above opportunities for action and the glow of wielded power, a pervading nausea at life's futility; and this, though perhaps not the most universal motive of the cloister retreat in the early centuries of Western monasticism, since many, aside from any hope of heaven, doubtless found a safer and easier life behind monastic walls, was none the less a powerful motive among many of the finest spirits who embraced with eagerness the monastic life.

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[16] This right, conceded in the *Donation,* was a prerogative of the clergy of Rome in the time of Gregory I. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétienne,* 415, 417.

[17] The interested reader will find a translation of a large part of the *Donation of Constantine* in Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* VII, vii.

Montalembert tells a story from the early sixth century which indicates how a barbarian monarch could not appreciate the ascetic's purpose, though he might be moved to sympathy by his picturesque and uncompromising bravery. A certain monk, Lupicin, appealed to the Burgundian monarch in behalf of some poor neighbors who had been oppressed by some subordinate ruler. Entering the palace, "an old man clothed in skins," the first impulse of the king, having been convinced as to the justice of the pleaded cause, was to offer him large presents of land and vineyards for his monks.[18] With the same barbarian prodigality, upon a larger scale, the nunnery of Gandersheim, founded in the ninth century at Hildesheim, was endowed at its foundation with 11,000 manors.[19] The natural temptations to accumulate riches fought everywhere against the unworldly contempt of riches inherent in the monastic ideal, but in such a case as this latter it is difficult to believe that any such an ideal had a place in the plan of foundation.

Then again, the Germanic peoples, Franks particularly, remodeled Christianity after their own ideal. They understood a mighty God of battles better than a gentle savior. Nowhere is this more strikingly shown that in Otfrid's setting of the gospel story into the language of the Franks (about 870). In his prefatory explanation he says:

> All peoples, if they are not separated from them by the breadth of the sea, fear them, which is, as I well know, the will of God. . . . None of them would tolerate to be ruled by a king of foreign birth, who had not grown up among them, or that anyone, from any nation on earth should undertake to rule them.[20]

These words do not come from a chronicle of their own wars, it is worth repeating, but from a paraphrase of the gospel story. And in this story, as it is told, the characters take on the form of Frankish paladins, always ready with their swords. So Peter is portrayed at the moment when the servants of the High Priest come to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsesame:

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[18] Montalambert, *The Monks of the West,* I, 289-290.
[19] Thompson, *Feudal Germany,* 19.
[20] Bühler, *Das Frankenreich,* 490.

> Straightway Simon Peter was wroth,
>   the swift sword-wielder,
> Wild anger boiled within him,
>   not a word could he utter,
> Wounded in heart so sore
>   that they dared lay hand on the Master.
> Grimly the bold knight stepped forth
>   facing the servants, shielding his Lord.
> Forthwith he had decided,
>   no timid lingering in his breast;
> Lightning-swift from its sheath
>   he slipped his sword-blade,
> Swung full-strength and found,
>   the keen edge leaving its mark
> With Malchus, the ear cleft clean
>   upon his right side.

Such a Peter the Franks could well understand, for of such apostles there were not a few in the kingdom and empire of the Franks, fighting bishops and fighting abbots, from the time of the Merovingians well through the tenth century.

But the vices as well as the virtues of the Franks also played their part in giving the Church a prevalent complexion hardly consistent either with the words and life of Jesus or the practices of the early Christian community. It has been said that, just as the plundering of Roman Gaul furnished the material foundation for the Frankish empire, so the acceptance of Roman Catholicism gave it the ideal element of its civilization,[21] but the plundering came first, and the habit of plunder did not spare altogether the ecclesiastical institutions. A way was found to make this consistent in a measure with the accepted ideal. The Franks for a time regarded the Church with an awe combined of two elements. First it had the sacredness of a religious organization, and the Franks were by instinct respecters of priests. Then too it was to them an element of the Roman civilization and culture. For a time the Christians were allowed to elect their bishops without interference, and those chosen continued to be, for the most part, Gallo-Romans of good birth. But the material prizes of bishoprics and rich monasteries were too tempting, and more and more were coveted by the Frankish leaders themselves. Then more and more the right of the Christian communities to elect their bishops freely was limited, first by the king, exercising a right of veto against candidates undesirable to him, until finally the Frankish monarchs practically chose the bishops themselves, and could always at least force the election of one they particularly desired, or even grant the office to favorites, as a benefice entirely within their gift. Much the same thing happened with the office of abbot. Needless to say it was not long before the desirable prizes went to Franks, and at a time when these semibarbarian raiders had not yet reached the point of assimilating the ideal element of their borrowed civilization, but were quite capable of taking and using in their own way the material element.

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[21] Bühler, *Das Frankenreich,* 14.

King's men and churchmen were thus not only in much the same material situation, with much the same duties and prerogatives; they were also of the same breed, and it is hardly strange that they should so largely have shared the same vices, of which the dominant ones were cruelty, drunkenness and wenching.

Such being the situation among the prelates, of the generality of monks and lower clergy not much could have been expected. Being for a large part so ignorant that they could not read at all, or little beyond the service books known substantially by heart, the assimilation of any ideal other than that they saw exemplified about them was impossible. What happened within a monastery depended entirely upon who governed it, and the institution of *lay abbots,* who merely enjoyed the revenues of the community and sometimes to an extent which left nothing even to feed the monks, left many of them with no religious governor at all. Disorders in monasteries and nunneries were so common, and those responsible often so highly placed, that even a canon against them had to be drawn with care: "The manner of life of monks and of handmaids of God (nuns) should remain firmly under a sacred rule. The property taken from the Church should maintain the monks and nuns, up to a point where they satisfy their needs. . . ."[22] Synods were not always dealing with situations where they could command in these times, and must content themselves with the modestly worded expression of a pious wish.

As for the parochial clergy—other natural temptations and the unnatural temptations of celibates aside—they found it more comfortable and pleasant to be popular with their parishioners, for whom the still vigorously smoldering embers of the old pagan practices still had considerable appeal.[23] According to letters of the reforming Boniface, they were often guilty of preaching and abetting pagan practices.[24]

Persisting pagan practices were not few in number. Sacrifices were apparently offered at the tombs of the dead, pigs were sacrificially slaughtered at the vernal equinox, old ceremonies of tree and woods worship remained, sacrifices were still offered upon the old megalithic altar stones to Wodan and to Thor, and at sacred fountains. Incantation, sorcery and divination was practiced with age-old formulas. Auguries were taken, from the flight of birds, the neighing of horses, the bellowing of bulls. In times of eclipse the people gathered to shout encouragement to the sun or moon, that it might persevere in its struggle not to be swallowed up, to the consequent inconvenience of dependent human beings.[25]

Edifying and romanticizing apologetic historians who portray the saintly Boniface as a brave and zealous *reformer* may easily sacrifice to his heroic figure a distorted picture of the general population. This is certainly done if the religious situation of these centuries is treated as a defection from the Christian ideal. Some defection there probably was, but in general it would be more true to say that the rivalry between religion and the untrammeled instincts of natural man, subjected at once to the moral and material temptations of barbarism and civilization, was largely between the miracles of Martin of Tours and the magic of indigenous incantations. Christianity had scarcely scratched the surface of society.

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[22] Synod of Soissons (744), Canon III.
[23] Canon IV, Council of Liftenae, Canon VI, Synod of Soissons.
[24] Fliche, *La Chrétienté Médiévale,* 124.
[25] See Hefele, *History of Councils,* IV, 407ff.

## XXV

Charles slept,  
Like a man whom trouble labors.  
God sent Saint Gabriel to him,  
Bidden to guard the Emperor,  
And all night long around his bolster  
Hovered the angels.[1]

So sleeps, under the particular protection of God, the Charlemagne of the *Chansons de Geste,* become as much a legendary hero as the fabled Arthur of the Round Table; clothed with an august dignity, at once regal and sacerdotal, which in a measure immobilizes him while about and for him doughty paladins win victories of faith against the infidel.[2]

That he should, two centuries after his death, have become the central figure of a cycle of legendary epics, his birth elaborated by old motifs of folk tale, his boyhood confused with that of his grandfather,[3] and himself made protagonist in that struggle against the Saracens,

—who love not God, but serve Mahomat,  
And call in prayer upon Apollyon;[4]

those Crusades, which were to occupy the imagination and arms of the eleventh, and several centuries thereafter, indicates something as to the historical significance of the reign of Charles the Great. It stands, midway in the five centuries following the settlement of Germanic tribes in western Europe, something like a walled castle with ordered garden plots, surrounded by wild, tangled, and almost pathless woods. Even the castle is not quite real. In its walls some of the stones are unsubstantial aspirations; administrative forms of order which by no means always function orderly. In its gardens some of the flowers are exotics still far from acclimated, others are fabricated of paper and thinly washed with paint which pathetically betrays their artifice.

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[1] *Chanson de Roland,* 2525-2529.

[2] This combination of the imperial and sacerdotal in the character with which legend clothed him is exemplified in a twelfth-century wood carving (in the possession of the author) which portrays him, with his long beard, crowned and throned, the orb of the world surmounted by a cross, so often found in the hand of Christ, in his left hand, his right hand with two fingers extended, in the traditional priestly gesture of benediction.

[3] Charles the Hammer.

[4] *Chanson de Roland,* 7-8.

But there is a glory in this interlude of order and culture which is not all romance. Its *renascence* breathed refreshment into old ideals, all but disappeared, and helped to keep them alive afterwards, even where forced to live in hiding, until the desire for gentler culture and more humanitarian ways became more widespread.

But what the ardor of one large-hearted and large-handed man had tended and harbored to a partially immature flowering, only the sword of that one man could then maintain. Here again we are reminded of Arthur. "My time hieth fast, said the king—take thou Exalibur my good sword, and go with it to yonder waterside, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water."[5]

It might have been as well had Charlemagne bid them cast his sword into the water at his death, for so it was wielded by those who came after him that the waters of disorder closed instead over much of what he had striven to organize and institute.

But let us turn from romance to history.

The early Carolingians, particularly the greatest of them Charles the Great or Charlemagne, mean a number of positive things for European history. With these positive things the Church or the Christian religion, one or another Christian institution or ideal, is usually connected.

The ancestors of Charlemagne, all subtractions made for the eulogy which they shared with him, seem still to have been an improvement even upon the best of the Merovingians. The earliest of this family known to history, a certain Arnulf who retired from a career of statesmanship to become a monk, and later to be made a saint, implanted a tradition of piety in the family. This Arnulf was the great-grandfather of Charles the Hammer, already referred to several times. Charles the Hammer suffered in youth by reason of a stepmother's attempts to set him aside in favor of her own sons. His career began with an escape from her, followed by some vigorous blows struck in his own behalf which made him soon the acknowledged head of the house, and ruler of the Franks. He seems to have been something between a powerful robber baron and a champion of Christian civilization most of whose services to the cause were performed upon some field of battle.

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[5] Malory, *La Morte d'Arthur,* XXI, v.

Circumstances placed him in relation with Boniface, the British monk whom we have seen, departing as "Bishop to the Infields" beyond the Rhine, with letters both from the pope and Charles. Boniface, together with his general services to the growth of Christianity, was one of the best papal servants of all times. Wherever he went it was as a delegate of the Roman pontiff, working always to cement closer relationship between the newly converted peoples with their monarchs and the Papal see.

At the same time Boniface saw from the beginning that, without the protection of the Frankish princes, he could do little or nothing: neither "control the people nor correct the morals of monks and nuns," and only under their instruction could he root out "pagan rites and idol-worshiping sacrileges." [6]

So Boniface became a mediator between the pope and the ruler of the Franks, establishing a relation which was to continue useful to both sides. The popes, oppressed by the Lombards, separated by schism from the Eastern Empire and Church, were quick to cultivate the friendship of the Franks. Despite the high-handed way in which this Charles treated Church property, abstracting rich manors for this one of his henchmen, and tossing a Bishop's miter to another (in punishment for which ecclesiastical legend consigned him to eternal punishment with vengeful hatred [7]) the pope a few years before his death sent two embassies to him, with many rich gifts, and the honor of a Roman consulship.[8] Gifts and honor came too late to earn immediate return;[9] he was weary, sick, and stayed rather quietly at home until he died. But the next generation was established in a closer relationship to Rome, consulting often with the incumbent of papal power.

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[6] From a letter of Boniface to a friend in England, the Bishop of Winchester.

[7] A saintly bishop of Orléans, after a vision of Charles tormented in the lowest hell, had his tomb opened, to find the body gone, and the vault charred and blackened with smoke and flame.

For this next generation a pope was indeed to perform important services. In 747, at Rome, Pope Zacharias made one of the sons of Charles a priest, Carloman, brother of Pepin the Short, having decided to retire from the world as a monk. Four years later the same pope performed a still greater service for Charles' other son. Omitting the diplomacies of approach, and the careful wording of a decision which aims not to take more than necessary responsibility, this service raised Pepin, "by the authority of the Roman pontiff, from the office of prefect of the palace (major-domo) to the dignity of king." [10]

The papacy was not insensible of the obligation it had established. Two years later, the chronicler tells us, "Came the Pope Stephen to King Pepin, to the king's court at Quierzy. He asked for protection for himself and the Roman Church against the hostile aggressions of the Lombards." [11] Then, the chronicle continues, "After Pope Stephen had received assurance from King Pepin that he would protect the Roman Church, he anointed him with sacred oil to the honorable dignity of kingly office, and with him Pepin's two sons, Charles and Carloman." [12]

The older of these sons, Charles, had already been given a rôle to play in these friendly advances. A lad of fourteen he had been sent ten miles ahead of his father to greet Pope Stephen, had dismounted as the papal cortège approached, and walked the remaining distance to where the king awaited them at the bridle of the pontiff.

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[8] The honor was not properly within the pope's granting.

[9] One chronicle states the presents to have been intended to block friendly relations with Constantinople, another that assistance against the Lombards was sought.

[10] Einhard, *Vita Karoli,* 3.

[11] Einhard, *Annales,* 753-754.

[12] "The same year," this chronicle continues, "Boniface . . . . was murdered by the heathen, and crowned with martyrdom. The king and pope were spending this winter together; one task of Boniface accomplished.

Twenty years later this same Charles, a king in all his six feet five of stature, entered Rome for the first time. This time the papal *crosses* were sent forward to greet him, and at their approach he dismounted, walking from that point to the city, ascending to the tomb of Peter on the Vatican, stooping to kiss each step as he mounted to it. One can well imagine him awed at the moment of his first visit to the Eternal City and the throne of the Prince of the Apostles.

Three times subsequently he visited Rome, each time to face some question of political policy. Doubtless the feeling of awe had worn rather thin when he came for the last time in 800. We are all likely to remember that on the occasion of this visit, after the service in the basilica of St. Peter, on Christmas day, he was crowned Emperor. But, as a landmark in the relations between the papacy and the Frankish monarch, it is perhaps of greater importance to know the cause of that visit. He had come to conduct an inquiry into charges which had been made against the pope (Leo III) because of which he had been mishandled by some of his own clergy, who had made what seems to have been an unsuccessful attempt to blind him and cut out his tongue.[13] Two days before the morning upon which the crown was placed upon the head of Charles, Leo mounted a pulpit in his cathedral church, and in a long oath of denial declared his innocence of the charges which had caused this attack upon him.

All the circumstances leading to this last visit of Charlemagne to Rome help to make it clear that he looked upon its protection, conscientiously to be sure, but in a way which left his sovereign hands quite free for action, and his regal head quite free to choose the means. He wrote to the same Leo, in reply to a letter of the latter announcing his election as pope, that he rejoiced in the fidelity and in the "humility of obedience" it expressed.[14] In another letter he outlines his conception of the relation of the

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[13] An account of this visit is in Einhard, *Annales*. The oath comes from Charlemagne's correspondence. See Bühler, *Das Frankenreich*, 243-244 for German translation of texts. For fuller modern account, Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, VIII, chap. ix.

[14] This letter quoted, Hodgkin, VIII, 167, note.

Papal See and himself to the task of defending the holy Church of Christ. It was his own task, with the assistance of God's mercy, to defend it in all places, keeping off the infidel attacks from without, propagating the Catholic truth within:

> As it is to you, very sacred Father, he continues, to aid our arms, in raising, like Moses, your hands toward heaven that, by your intercession, God our guide, may give everywhere victory to the Christian people over the enemies of his sacred name, and that our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified throughout the universe.[15]

Would even the least politely guarded diplomatic language have allowed him to say less plainly to the Church's supreme bishop, "Do you and your clergy at your altars pray steadily that the cause of Christ be mighty in my hands?"

Before him his father and grandfather had taken the initiative in ecclesiastical as well as secular affairs. Pepin used Church councils to legislate upon civil matters, and introduced bishops into the national assembly to balance the power of the secular lords. Little trouble was taken to separate affairs of Church and State, and a canon of the Synod of Soissons directs the bishops to see that the people were not given to pagan practices, and also to see that regular market fairs were held and honest weights and measures used in them.[16]

The more orderly legislation of Charlemagne clearly established the policy of legislating in the same manner concerning religious and secular affairs. In the *Capitulaires* two-fifths of the laws have to do with religion or public morals. Eighty-five laws directly concern religion and more than three hundred canon law. Only two hundred and seventy-three deal with political matters and administration.[17] In all that concerned property Charlemagne treated bishops and abbots exactly as he treated the counts. An early biographer writes that he never gave property to a churchman unless for some special reason, as Charlemagne himself explained, because, "With the revenue of that estate, that abbey, or that church, I can secure the fidelity of some vassal, as good a man as any bishop or count, and perhaps better." [18]

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[15] *Epistola,* viii (Migne, XCVIII, 908), quoted Vetault, *Charlemagne,* 347-348.

[16] Synod of Soissons, Canon VI.

[17] This calculation is of Guizot, and quoted from Vetault, *Charlemagne,* 388.

The Church had two distinct aspects. As a religious priesthood Charlemagne asked it to pray that God be with him in furthering the interests of the true faith. As an element in the feudal system the pope occupied much the same place as any other bishop. Charlemagne did not propose to increase papal temporalities except where it served his political policies.[19] It was clearly no time for the *Donation of Constantine,* probably already hiding somewhere in the papal chancery, to manifest itself.

But the relation of Charles—"most illustrious Augustus, great and peaceful god-crowned Emperor, Lord of the Roman Empire, by the grace of God King of the Franks and Lombards"—to Christianity during his reign is not to be summed up and dismissed in judging his attitude toward the clerics of his realm, which has led many to speak of the Frankish Church as a *State Church,* or in his by no means simple policy toward the papacy. These were problems of statesmanship, and as a statesman he was by no means sentimental.

As his earliest biographer says, "He cherished the Christian religion, with which he had been imbued from earliest infancy, most scrupulously and piously." [20] All his care for ordering and civilizing his realm centered in his desire to be a Christian monarch; and with this same desire was closely connected his personal ardor for "culture," which came so late, in the midst of so many other duties, that his laborious efforts to learn to write succeeded only very moderately.[21] From this it results that his influence upon the history of Christian civilization grew more largely from personal efforts and enthusiasms than from his political policy, and lived more in cherishing and passing on a tradition, a number of different traditions in fact, than in permanently affecting or changing religious institutions. First of all he reintroduced the ideal of cultural unity in an empire which aimed to extend throughout the western portion of the continent of Europe, and this culture had now become, in intention, completely Christian. Second, the empire having become from the time of Constantine for Christian tradition a Christian empire. Charlemagne bound the two ideas of Church and Empire together again, this time with no important and inconsistent pagan institutions to combat his purpose, but rather with a whole administrative organization, that of the bishops, ready-made to help him hold the two together. The culture he furthered was largely imitative, his administrative forms were to be swept away for the most part; but his personal interests and enthusiasms vitalized for coming centuries the traditions which were passed on, gave them a setting which moved the imagination of the generations to come in a more intimate way than any emperor with a pagan background of classical civilization ever could have done. His personality, his court, became a matter of history as well as legend. The two, blended and separate, in different ways, became a part of the home-grown heritage upon which medieval civilization was to rest. To understand his influence it is therefore necessary to get closer to him, and to the circle of intimates he drew around him.

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[18] Monachos S. Galli, *De vita Karoli,* I, xiii.

[19] When he had conquered the Lombards he did not turn over Italy to the pope, as was doubtless hoped, but adopted the title King of the Lombards, and later had his infant son crowned as King of Italy.

[20] Einhard, *Vita Karoli,* 26.

[21] *Ibid.,* 25.

Charlemagne is one of the great characters of history who was also a great man, while not being in any strict sense of the word a genius in any of the departments of activity his reign embraced. He passed many laws and attempted comprehensive administrative reforms, without being usually considered either a great legislator or a great statesman. He fought many military campaigns, with results in the end successful, without being called a military genius by competent persons. His ideas were comprehensive rather than penetrating, his sympathies were of a hearty breadth which took account of few subtleties, and much of the laborious industry of his life doubtless rose from the fact that government remained for him largely a matter of countless details, none of which he allowed to slip from his personal oversight. He had a clear practical head, a simplicity of nature which was in itself a defense against diplomatic intrigue, and perhaps above everything else a patient conscientiousness. He seems to have plodded patiently from one military campaign to another, filling in the vacancies between with an attempt to adjust some diplomatic task involving a pope who most often wished to use him, or a Byzantine emperor at some intrigue.

Such judgments are however the reflections of generalizing historians. What his contemporaries saw in him and understood was a patriarchal prince, in the midst of a numerous almost nomadic household, which moved from palace to palace where his duties took him; always the center of the life of a great family, watchful over every little detail of its life. Such was to be the medieval ideal of a king.

Einhard, who lived in the palace during Charlemagne's later years, gives us a detailed catalogue of his physical characteristics. Legend credited him with eight feet of stature; Einhard says "seven times the length of his foot." It is safe to assume he was six feet five or more in height. His eyes were "very large and animated," his nose a bit exaggerated in length, his countenance cheerful, even gay. To be sure his neck was a bit too thick and short, his belly a bit too conspicuous; but with his confident carriage, his mane of blond hair (white in the time of Einhard), his glowing health, even despite his thin voice "hardly congruous with his physique," we are assured that his general impression was one of virility, for which last there is the additional evidence of nine wives and at least twenty recognized offspring.[22]

But what should interest us more than any of these bodily characteristics—frail mortifying flesh as to which one does not too precisely inquire when it is question of a saint—are other things. We are more edified in learning that he had a horror of drunkenness, though we should perhaps blush to learn that he partook of alcoholic liquors; and that he was but a moderate eater, banqueting rarely, and having served habitually at dinner only four courses, not counting the roast,[23] to which latter he was addicted to such point as to have taken an aversion to his physicians, because, in his later years, they advised him to substitute boiled for roast meat.[24]

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[22] *Vita Karoli,* 22, contains the catalogue of Charlemagne's physical characteristics. The question of wives is more complicated, and the status of some of them a matter of dispute, nor is there an accurate catalogue of concubines.

His fondness for his favorite daughters made him unwilling that they should marry.[25] This fact however is not to be counted part of his religious character, since it was not for the preservation of their souls that he thus deprived them, but on the contrary he harbored their lovers among his favorites, and supported their children in his household.

He was hospitable even to the point of overcrowding his palaces with strangers,[26] among whom so many were monks that we are brought gradually nearer to the religious element of his nature.

He evidently made it his habit to attend four religious services a day, when in good health. At such times he took care that all should proceed in an orderly manner, asking often the sacristan to remove some unseemly filth not fitting with the sacredness of the place. He spent a great deal of money building handsome churches, and providing them with ornaments of gold and silver, and plenteous supply of sacerdotal vestments. He took great care to perfect the manner of reading the lessons and chanting the Psalms, himself expert in these matters, though never himself reading aloud in public, nor chanting in church with a tone that might be heard above the other voices.[27]

With the same care he governed his household. His wife and children followed him from palace to palace, and were always at table with him.[28] The houses which sheltered his guests were so arranged that he could always see who went in and out.[29]

When we note the petty details of his life in its homely aspects, one is reminded of the home and parish life of some opulent banker, of ruddy countenance and numerous offspring, who rules his household with hearty affection, but rules it none the less, and

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[23] *Vita Karoli,* 24.

[24] *Ibid.,* 22.

[25] *Ibid.,* 19.

[26] *Ibid.,* 21.

[27] *Vita Karoli,* 26.

[28] *Ibid.,* 19.

[29] This detail is furnished by the Monk of St. Gall, and quoted in Lavisse, *History of France,* II, 353.

"patronizes" his parish church, the clergy generally, with a measured kindly geniality which keeps them well fed and *in their place.*

Prelates as such did not impress him, though for one pope, Adrian I, he seems to have had a deep personal affection.[30] Toward scholars and men of letters his attitude was different, and none the less so because these men were in such an age always clerics, and his cultural aspiration thus attached itself to his general enthusiasm for the Christianizing of his empire. As he went about, wherever he found a man of literary eminence he attached him, if possible, and doubtless also if he found the man personally agreeable, to his court.

The story of the palace school of Charlemagne is recounted in some measure in every history, no matter how general, which embraces his time. Rather than repeat what has been so often recounted, and is so readily available elsewhere, let us note that here again, in his educational influence, he conceives his task in a patriarchal and parochial manner, encouraging by exhortation elsewhere what he had first on account of personal enthusiasm instituted in his own family circle and patriarchal court. Having done so let us turn to consider the monastic life which had before him ripened in the British Isles, and which, in the person of Alcuin, the chief of his palace school, connected this movement with the influence of Charlemagne.

The Venerable Bede, in his *Ecclesiastical History,* tells how, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius,

> whilst Eleutherus, a holy man, presided over the Roman Church, Lucius, king of the Britons, sent a letter to him, entreating that by his command he might be made a Christian. He soon obtained his pious request, Bede continues, and the Britons preserved the faith . . . uncorrupted and entire, in peace and tranquillity until the time of Diocletian.[31]

Bede knows nothing about the earlier missionary campaign of

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[30] "Quem in amicis praecipium habebat." So says Einhard, telling of how he wept on hearing of his death (19).

[31] *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation,* written by the Venerable Bede (731), chap. iv.

Joseph of Arimathea, who had come to Britain with the precious burden of the Holy Grail, at the same time, certainly neither a day sooner nor later than the moment when the ship which bore Mary, Martha and Lazarus touched keel in the harbor of Marseilles. Indeed not for many centuries did anyone know, and not until the beginning of the fourteenth century was it important for anyone to believe, that Christianity had been so augustly established in the British Isles.[32] His belief that the faith was preserved inviolate until the time of Diocletian was doubtless comfortably founded upon ignorance as to what happened until St. Alban became England's first martyr (306).[33]

Early in the fifth century, Pelagius having come as already noted from the British Isles, many British Christians made a long misguided attempt to *save themselves* by their own efforts, according to the heresy of Pelagius. When the holy Germanus, invoking the Trinity, applied the casket of relics he wore about his neck to the eyes of a blind girl, causing her immediately to see, not only the people about her but the light of orthodox truth, the wicked opinions were obliterated from the minds of the onlookers, but unfortunately a score of years later there remained others to be convinced.[34]

One is still upon the borderland between myth and history in recalling Patrick, the good saint who came from the Abbey of Lerins, on the little island washed by the gentle waters of the Mediterranean, to link his name for always with the Christianizing of Ireland.

> It is easy to understand the enthusiasm with which the Irish rushed into the arms of Christianity. To them it was the realization of their fairest dreams; the Kingdom of Heaven was within them as it never was in the subjects of the Roman discipline. Christ was a reality as palpable as that of a friend, "Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ to the right of me,

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[32] At the Council of Constance (1417) the English delegates wished to prove that their church was independent of that of France, and this local legend of the Abbey of Glastonbury, even then of recent birth, became universally useful to English clerics.

[33] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History,* chap. vii.

[34] *Ibid.,* xviii, xxi.

Christ to the left of me, Christ in lying down, Christ in sitting, Christ in rising up, Christ in the heart of everyone that thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone that speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in very ear that hears me" . . . with such passion of faith did the great Patrick invoke his Saviour, when his enemies were lying in ambush for him. And the story runs that all they saw passing by was a wild deer and its fawn, Patrick's servant.[35]

A century after the death of Patrick Ireland had come to be known as the "Island of the Saints," so many monasteries flourished there. In these monasteries religious fervor and intellectual enthusiasm went hand in hand. One of them sent forth Columba, not only a zealous monk and missionary but an excellent scholar in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, to labor and found monastic communities, first in the north of Scotland, then in Gaul, finally in Italy. This monastic life in Ireland was enriched in the fifth century by refugees from Britain, driven out by the conquest of the pagan Saxons. When Augustine, sent as has been noted by Gregory the Great, was allowed to preach his faith to the Saxons, the tide flowed back again in the seventh century. The English Christians tended, in a period when the Merovingian Kings of Gaul paid little attention to papal authority, toward orthodox Roman regularity, and we have seen Boniface go forth from England to be in Gaul and Germany a most faithful and effective papal propagandist. But the influence of the "Scot" (so then was called the Irishman,[36] was neither bound to regularity, nor did it spend itself in controversy. It begot Pelagius on the one side, declared a heretic for his too great emphasis on the independence of man; John the Irishman, or Erin-born[37] (John Scotus Erigena) on the other, no less a heretic for confounding Man and God. The latter could however scarcely on any account have escaped being accounted an heretic, since he was of a genius so original that he has been called at once the founder of Scholasticism,[38] and of the movement which destroyed it;[39] a mystic of the Hindu manner and a mystic of the Neoplatonic manner;[40] and who seems indeed to have constructed, under the inspiration of the cheapest Neoplatonic-Christianized mysticism,[41] a metaphysic of pantheistic tendency with a substantial basis of logic, and of a loftiness and comprehensiveness which even Spinoza does not dwarf.

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[35] So the most recent historian of British civilization, in one of many passages no less charming than historically discerning, writes of Irish Christianity and Patrick. (Wingfield-Stratford, *The History of British Civilization,* I, 97-98.

[36] Ireland was then called Scotia Major (Greater Scotland).

[37] The derivation of "Erigena" is a matter of controversy, and at best uncertain.

[38] So by the German historian of philosophy, Ueberweg.

The catalogue of his own works which Bede puts at the end of his *History,* including many "books" of commentary upon both testaments of the Bible, homilies, lives of saints, martyrs and holy abbots, hymns and epigrams, "A book of orthography (a spelling-book) digested in alphabetical order; also a book of the art of poetry, and to it I have added another little book of tropes and figures,"[42] forms a proper part of any account of Britain's contribution to the intellectual life of a dark period.

But it interests us to note, when we think of the long period of the Fathers, busied always with theology, exhortation and apologetic, how keen was the humanistic interest of these British monks. In telling of Cædmon's *Creation* Bede writes:

> This is the sense, but not the words in order as he sang them in his sleep; for verses, though never so well composed, cannot be literally translated out of one language into another, without losing much of their beauty and loftiness.[43]

Something of this feeling Alcuin, who was his pupil, and who brings us back to Charlemagne, seems to have carried with him across the channel. There may appear something almost childish in Charlemagne's little circle of *literati,* addressing one another in fictitious and affected names: Charles as David or as Solomon, Alcuin as Flaccus, Einhard as Bezaleel, some forgotten poetaster as Homer.[44] But Alcuin truly loved the classics, and had been charmed by Virgil at the age of eleven, though his own poems are often affected absurdities. And what perhaps most surprises us is to find Columba, long before this little renascence of Charlemagne, confessing a knowledge of the poems of Sappho in a graceful imitation of her verse, which, in agreement with the Venerable Bede, we call untranslatable:

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[39] So by De Wulf, *History of Mediæval Philosophy.*

[40] De Wulf implies the latter, Wingfield-Stratford states the former.

[41] The so-called pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

[42] From the short autobiography appended by Bede to his *Ecclesiastical History.*

[43] *Ibid.,* IV, xxiv.

[44] Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* VIII, 136, gives a complete list of these names.

Trojugenarum
Inclyta vates
Nomine Sapho
Versibus istis
Dulce solebat
Edere carmen.[45]

[45] Columba is merely saying that, in verses such as he is writing, in the country of the Trojans, a distinguished poet by the name of Sappho was accustomed to sing her songs.

# XXVI

Charlemagne died in 814. Not thirty-five years had passed when, in a prologue written by the first editor of Einhard's biography of him, we read of the State as having already been "rocked by many and various disturbances."[1] Time did not better conditions. A sense of disaster pervades the chronicle of the Saxon Annalist. In 840, the year of Einhard's death, the Norsemen first sailed up the Seine. In 853 the Saxon *Chronicle* tells of their visit to the Loire,[2] they having in previous years worked along the shores of Brittany, finding the monasteries most profitable prey.

> For the first time the fleet of the Norsemen came to the shores of the Loire. . . . They invaded Nantes in a sudden attack, sacking the city with general slaughter, fire, and rapine. They even killed people in church, while the bishop, on Easter Sunday according to custom, was performing the ceremony of baptism, and massacred one of the clergy. They then devastated the surrounding country, Angers first, then Tours which they occupied, like a tempest laying everything prone without discrimination, even burning the church of the most excellent pontiff Martin.
>
> In the year of the incarnation of the Lord 855, people were terrified by an earthquake, unusual disturbances of winds, a cyclone, many misfortunes. . . . The body of Saint Martin rose from its tomb.
>
> . . . 856, King Louis, son of Louis the Emperor, takes to himself in marriage Queen Thevteberga, from which union great misfortune fell, not only upon himself but upon the whole realm.
>
> [In 867] Saracens, coming from Africa into the vicinity of Beneventum, laid waste practically the entire region with slaughter, rapine and fire.

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[1] Walahfrid Strabon, *Prologus to Einhard's Vita Karoli.*

[2] Mawer, in *Cambridge Medieval History* dates this expedition ten years earlier (Vol. III, 316).

> [In 872] Charles the King deprived his son Carloman of his eyes. . . . Then Carloman, by order of his father, though still a boy, was made a cleric and afterward ordained a deacon.

> [The following year] In the month of August, an innumerable multitude of locusts, coming from the East, devastated almost all Gaul.[3]

The following century was worse if anything, and has earned such epithets as the "Dark Century," and "the most repulsive century in Christian annals." A new race of invaders takes the place of the Norsemen, now established as *Normans* and allies of the French throne in the rich lands either side the lower Seine. The new invaders are the descendents of the Huns of the fourth century. These *Hungarians,* the Saxon Annalist says, overran the kingdoms of the Bavarians, Suevi and Franks, devastating and burning everything, and entered Lombardy with fire and sword.[4]

During the latter half of the ninth century the papacy was able, first under the hand of a strong pope, Nicholas I, whom the emperor himself had selected, to reëstablish something of its lost prestige (858-867). During this period the Donation of Constantine first dared to show its face in public, together with a whole dossier of other documents, alike forgeries, known as the *Decretals of Isidore.* The Church reached out in missionary endeavor toward the empire of the Bulgars, following up their missionary campaign with an attempt to make this land a province of the Church. The emperor looked upon these diplomatic advances with an envious eye, and forced the pope to hand over to him the greater part of the rich gifts sent from Bulgaria to the Roman pontiff. Relations between emperor and pope were by no means friendly, and when the former had occasion in 864 to pay an angry visit to Rome, his soldiers treated the city as an enemy's country, subjecting it to plunder and rapine.

Despite outbursts of anger on the part an emperor, whose force a pope could meet only with intrigue, the papacy had for a time the better of it. All European political interests: Roman nobles, Italians generally, the dukes, bishops and counts of the empire, the invading Saracens and Norsemen, joined with the pope in taking secret pleasure in every sign of weakness the empire might betray. The successor of Nicholas followed, with a less strong hand, the policy of his predecessor. The next pope was a resourceful and wily politican, who extricated himself from many difficulties, won several short-lived victories of diplomacy, and a brilliant naval battle against the fleet of the Saracens.

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[3] Annalista Saxo, *Chronicles,* under corresponding years.

[4] *Ibid.,* under year 901

However, weak as was the empire, its power dissipating among the dukes, bishops and counts Charlemagne had set up, not as political powers but administrative officers, the political situation of the papacy was at bottom no stronger. Even in Rome, now for two or three centuries important only as the seat of the papacy,[5] the pope had only such power as was born of respect for his religious office or fear of his ecclesiastical punishments.[6] The Church was no longer the political unit it had been. No one was less eager to see a strong papacy than the bishops themselves, beginning with the two most powerful of them in Italy, the Archbishops of Milan and of Ravenna. In the meantime Italy was on the secular side profiting by the weakness of the empire, to set in motion those particularist tendencies which were to divide it, through the Middle Ages and after, into a number of *republics,* oscillating between anarchy and tyranny and kept asunder by bitter rivalries. The strongest pope was weak without the support of strong alliances, and a weak pope was a puppet whom a few Roman nobles or an angry emperor might drive from office.[7]

In the course of the tenth century six popes were removed or driven from office, two were killed and one died in prison. Even the peaceful death of a pontiff resulted in the looting of the papal palace by the combined effort of his entourage. Indeed the same thing was true on the death of other bishops in these days of episcopal luxury,[8] made possible by the fact that the property of the Church vested, in title, in the bishop, so that his death left it for a time without legal proprietor.

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[5] Gregorovius calls Rome, in the whole seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, "eine durchaus geistliche Stadt" (*Geschichte der Stadt Rom,* III, 250).

[6] "Intanto la cittá di Roma, poi ch'ebbe scosso il giogo dell'impero d'Orienta, conservó sempre le forme, se non lo spirito d'una repubblica. Il papa non aveva entro Roma altro potere che quello che nasceva dal rispetto religioso dovuto al suo carattere, e dal timore delle censure della Chiesa." Sismondi, *Repubbliche Italiane,* I, 56.

[7] Even a relatively strong pope, John X, might be put in prison when he came to be in the way of Roman nobles.

It is impossible to follow here the ins and outs of papal history during this dark period. Official pontifical chronicles have much about which they prefer to be silent, and other chroniclers leave much room for difference of opinion. A large part of the European world, too far from Rome to know the personal character of a particular pope or the complexion of the Curia, still might on occasion of doubt apply for confirmation of authority or opinion to the successor of Peter,[9] but the most loyal son of the Church, if he wishes to preserve his respectability as an historian, cannot find better words to apply to the general condition of the papacy during the tenth and early eleventh centuries than "degradation and shame, debauch and bloody cruelties." [10]

The citizens of Rome clung to their right to elect the Roman bishop, theirs from earliest Christian tradition, taken from them in the eighth century, but still admitted by an unusually strong pope in the ninth.[11] What was held as the people's right became easily the privilege of a few Roman nobles. During the first half of the tenth century it became the prerogative of two ambitious women, mother and daughter in succession, whose vivid personalities, in the words of Gregorovius, "break through, oddly enough, the cloisterlike monotony of papal history," [12] to render the customs of the court at Rome, in the words of another historian, "if not more pure, at least more gentle," [13] to make the monkish chronicler raise his hands in horror, crying with the prophet of the Old Testament, "Women ruled Jerusalem!" [14]

For more than a half a century, Theodora—a woman of illustrious birth, great intelligence and force of will; rich enough to support armies from her private purse, garrisoned in solid tombs of ancient patricians that had been transformed into fortresses; of combined womanly assets sufficient to bend to her wishes as lovers and devoted slaves many Roman nobles—and after her a daughter, Marozia, so like her that the two link together to make this fifty years a papal epoch, disposed of the papacy almost as effectively as though it had been the household chaplaincy of some petty prince.

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[8] Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom,* III, 202.
[9] Fliche, *La Reforme Gregorienne,* I, 10-13.
[10] *Ibid.,* I, 10.
[11] *Ibid.,* I, 5.
[12] *Geschichte der Stadt Rom,* III, 252.
[13] Sismondi, *Repubbliche Italiane,* I, 52.
[14] Benedicti sancti Andreae monachi chronicon, 30.

The first ecclesiastical achievements of Theodora followed her infatuation for a young cleric, for whom her influence first obtained the bishopric of Bologna, then the archbishopric of Ravenna, finally the papacy, which he attained in 914, as John X.

By this time Theodora was no longer young. Already her daughter, Marozia, married the following year to a rapidly rising Lombard, had a son of whom a former pope was generally considered to be the father.[15]

State affairs, papal affairs and family affairs were so closely united that two years after John X mounted the papal throne the crusade inspired by him against the Saracen invaders was led, as generals, by the husband of his former mistress and the husband of that former mistress' daughter, and with the latter the pope entered Rome in triumph before a victorious army, after annihilating the Saracen force.

The next act of the papal drama was reserved until after the death, both of Theodora and that husband of whom we have spoken. John X proved to be an excellent pope, firm and energetic and not fitted to be a puppet. Affairs did not go well between him and Marozia, with her new husband, and in 928, after some careful preparations which included the strengthening of the defenses of the Mausoleum of Hadrian,[16] John was arrested, clapped into prison, where he died within the year.

Marozia's son by the former pope (Sergius III) was not yet old enough to be made pope, so that two puppets in succession were raised by her influence to the papacy until, on the death of the second, in 931, her son who had now reached his twenty-first or twenty-second year, became Pope John XI.

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[15] In *Historia Pontificum Romanorum* of Ricobaldi of Ferrara this belief is corroborated by a confusion between John X (called son of Sergius III and Marozia) and John XI.

[16] Still existent as the Castle of St. Angelo.

Still the drama was not finished. Marozia became now for the second time a widow, and chose for herself another husband. To her first husband she had been married either by her own papal lover or her mother's,[17] and to this third husband she was probably married by another pope of intimate relationship, her son. But this third marriage turned out badly. Hugo, King of Italy in a turn of Italian political fortune we cannot follow, was gifted, and blessed in memory from having as page in his court at Pavia one who was to become bishop and chronicler; but at Rome he proved a failure, covering with insult a high-spirited son of Marozia. Finally, while this young Alberich served him as a page, Hugo lifted a hand and struck him in the face. Alberich rushed from the palace, gathered the Roman citizenry together, and with fiery eloquence asked them if they were slaves, to allow themselves to be governed by a foreigner and a woman. Rome had become a city of clerics, nobles and their dependents. The populace lived still, as in the days of the Roman Empire, largely upon charity, the pope now being the distributer of alms. They had nothing to lose, perhaps something to gain, under a young and energetic ruler, attractive in his person, who reminded them of Rome's former glory. Bells pealed forth an alarm, the populace sprang to arms, and Marozia and her new husband found themselves besieged in the Mausoleum of Hadrian, from which Hugo was glad to escape under cover of darkness. Truce was called only when Marozia and her son, Pope John, were shut up, virtual prisoners, in the Lateran; and until his death four years later John XI continued to be both pope and virtual prisoner.

Marozia now disappears from history, the date and manner of her death being unknown, but when Alberich had taken the title of "Prince and Senator of all the Romans," a second Theodora, Marozia's sister, and a second Marozia, niece of the first, bore the title "Senatrix of all the Romans," and the papacy was not yet lost to the family, since Alberich, before his death, assured the appointment of his son as pope, who in 955 mounted the papal chair as John XII. This John, like the last, his relative, received the dignity at an early age when, as the monkish chronicler remarks, his love of all women in general would have been but the amiable expression of spirited youth, had his ecclesiastical office not made it odious.[18]

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[17] The date of Marozia's first marriage, and for this reason which pope married her, is uncertain.

We cannot follow the ambitious career of this last public figure of the "House of Marozia" until his deposition for political reasons, by the Emperor Otto I; nor that of his successors until the end of the century, of whom for the most part the old chronicles have little to say except the laconic remark that they were seated or unseated by order of the emperor." [19]

The riches of the Church made its prelates members of the feudal ruling class, and as such partakers of the vices and weaknesses of that class, made, as the Chronicler remarks in the case of John XII, odious particularly because less consistent with other ideals for which they were supposed to stand. But, as within the feudal system, the Church had certain vices of its own, due to the fact that its properties did not descend by inheritance, but were attached to offices which periodically became vacant, to tempt avaricious clerics, or others willing to become so on a moment's notice for the sake of the properties which might thus come under their control.

This situation, at its worst in the tenth century, ripened and brought into the light of discussion two matters of commanding importance: the abuses which go by the name of *simony,* and the question of *sacerdotal celibacy.*

The following passages may be found in the Book of Acts:

> When Simon saw that the spirit was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money saying, "Give me also the power,

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[18] "Diligebat collectio feminarum, odibilis ecclesiarum, amabilis juvenis ferocitatis."

[19] The year 983 furnishes an exception: "Johannes XV, nationes Romanus sedit III menses, et cessavit . . . imperante eodem." Ricobaldi, *Historia Pontificum Rom.*

so that he upon whom I lay my hands may receive the holy spirit." But Peter answered, "To destruction with your money and yourself, because you have thought to buy with money the gift of God." [20]

This Simon was, according to the account, a magician, and one infers that he profited by his ability to amaze the people. There was doubtless also profit to be made out of the exercise of priestly functions when Gregory the Great confessed that, neither in Gaul nor Germany, might one hope to receive ordination without having previously distributed presents in appropriate places, calling this practice, with reference to the quoted incident, *simony.* But it was less the desire to purchase magic-working hands than rich revenues which brought about the practice, destined to flourish until by the year 1000 its stalk might boast three branchlets: the sale of ordination by bishops, the sale of episcopal consecration by archbishops, and the sale of bishoprics and abbeys by lay princes.[21]

As to the first type, one pope, early in the eleventh century, had to give up his intention of driving out all priests who had purchased ordination, fearing that this reform would leave the greater part of the parishes without clergy.

An abbey was of course a more valuable prize than a simple parish, and in turn might be robbed to obtain money with which to buy a bishopric. A bishop with a strong sense of family loyalty might abstract the sacred relics of a martyr from the treasure of one of his churches and offer them to the emperor, in order to obtain a bishopric for a nephew. If there were several candidates for a single office the bidding might run high. If the wherewithal might not be more directly laid hands on, it might be borrowed, against a promise of repayment when the prize had been secured. If one were poor, servility or flattery might serve as current coin.

Of course he who had paid good coin, of silver, flattery or a bent knee, expected a return. One bought, with a bishopric, not only the episcopal landed revenues, but the ability to sell in turn ordination to the lower grades. So simony spread like a plague. The greater the number who paid for their offices, and the more they were forced to pay, just so much the more must they hope to get out of the office when once it was theirs. Lay feudalism, with its marriages of convenience to increase feudal estates, was clean in comparison; not only because of the glaring inconsistency between such a situation and the ideals which confronted the Church every day in its Bible and its Fathers, but also because in the passing from hand to hand of lay properties affection might breed marriages, or grow in the married state, and death meant the passage of feudal power in the natural line of family inheritance.

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[20] Acts VIII. 18-20.

[21] Fliche, *La Reforme Gregorienne,* I, 25.

Nevertheless simony, crude and sordid as it may seem, had its subtleties. "It is not," the simoniac might argue, and did, "the spiritual office which is the object of sale, but the fief. Far from us the thought of buying consecration! It is only the possession of the lands and revenues attached that we buy." [22] Such distinctions were useful in many ways, particularly to lay princes a little later, in the struggle of the pope to get out of their hands the power of making ecclesiastical appointments, and canon law was bound to recognize them. But this same canon law recognized also the fact that ecclesiastical benefices were in theory granted because of certain religious duties performed by their holder. He who bought the benefice and he who performed the religious service were thus bound to be the same person, and nice distinctions as to what had been bought and sold in the act of simony had little saving grace to distinguish between a simoniac flesh and a consecrated soul. Simony largely determined the character of the clergy in any period where it was prevalent, and needless to say the character of the clergy greatly influenced the general complexion of the Christian religion.

To be sure the personal character of the clergy was of less importance at this time than earlier, when thoroughly civilized pagans had long experienced the mechanical sterility of a priesthood of mere functionaries, to whom had been given over the diplomatic relations between man and his gods. Then a Christian *elder* whose character evidenced a new variety of saintly heroism drew admiration and won converts. Now the ruder people of Gaul and Germany demanded magic, and the popular conception of the "mass" fitted well with their demand. This office grew in importance through the period of the Carolingians, theologians giving much labor to the explaining of its ceremonies and usages.[23] But few of the laity were interested in such matters. It was sufficient for them that there was a *saving magic* in its celebration, with which their presence at the moment had little or nothing to do.

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[22] *Ibid.,* I, 30.

A popular conception of Christianity which centered its practices in an act of magic suited as well as any might the character of the contemporary clergy, but there was a tradition which demanded something else, which here and there troubled many consciences.

But there was another aspect of simony which troubled Rome particularly. What profited it a man to be the successor of Peter, supreme over the Church, with all its bishops and its abbots, if he could do nothing to control their choice, next to nothing to discipline them, and when he could not even share in the simoniac profits incident to the filling of vacancies beyond the boundaries of his own episcopal see?

In the middle of the ninth century the papacy had in theory reached the culminating point of its temporal aspirations, but such claims were empty indeed when, for two centuries following, its prelates were generally dependent, not only in the getting but in the keeping of their offices, upon lay princes, and when it was consequently with these lay princes that all their material interests lay.

The question of sacerdotal celibacy, which attained new importance during the tenth century, was also bound up with the position of the Church within the feudal system. Here, however, we have less to do with the princes of Church and State, than with persons of humbler rank and more confined ambitions.

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[23] Moeller, *History of the Christian Church,* II, 214. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien,* shows that the ceremonies of the Church had reached a full development by the time of Charlemagne. The routine of the church calendar had been established. What could have been more convenient for tenth-century clergy?

It will little serve us to repeat here any of this particular period's evidence concerning the carnal indiscretions and inconsistencies of monks, nuns and secular clerics bound in form to celibate lives. Normal human impulses, like the poor, the Church had always with it, and the successful starving of the former was a problem more difficult than that of feeding the latter. Suffice it to say that in these centuries the desire to mortify the flesh had nothing like the popular appeal it enjoyed during the third and fourth centuries which had inaugurated monasticsm, and attempted with but partial success to fasten the ideal of perpetual chastity upon the clerical functionaries. At the beginning of the tenth century the Eastern part of the Church settled to the conviction that clerics should do their marrying before they reached the grade of subdeacon, and keep their wives until they reached that of bishop. But in the West compromises of practice were more favorably judged than those of theory. Gradually there crept into canon law the conviction that the lives of clerics should be, except for purposes directly concerned with their religious office, divorced from feminine contamination.

Concubinage is a luxury, particularly concubinage which dares not openly declare itself. Subterfuge, separate maintenance, the avaricious temptations of a woman who has beside her lover no lasting security—all these things are expensive, and for the comparatively rich. To guard the appearance of celibacy, though they did not always at this time take the trouble to guard it, was something only the richer prelates might even attempt with any decency. The poor parish priest could do so only in degradation, or at the expense of husbands, present or prospective, of his parish.

There were always, even in times of greatest profligate cynicism, monasteries which preserved as well as possible the celibate ideal which all in form accepted. It is difficult to believe that any appreciable number of persons, from individual conviction devoted to the ideal of celibacy, would have attempted then to realize their ideal outside of one of these cloisters. There was indeed always among monks the snobbish presumption that the secular clergy represented a lower religious ideal.

It is therefore of more importance here to note, not how laxly this ideal was held, in parish and cloister throughout Europe, but rather the fact that open and regular concubinage in the case of parish priests, which resulted in the birth of children and the establishment of family life, was very general, and that marriage was, despite the canons, not at all unusual among them. Moreover there was, during the tenth century, an attempt, more general than ever before, to make the marriage of the secular clergy regular and legal. This demand, however, was kept confined to the humble circles in which it originated. No voice arising from any influential circle ever became the advocate of poor country parsons who wished to give their companions of long standing, or their children, the security of the married state. It is hardly to be doubted that there was in many quarters more than mere lip service to the celibate ideal, but when from the papacy down it was flagrantly flouted, it is at least worth the asking why this appeal did not find anywhere influential support.

The answer to this question again is to be sought in the position of the Church in the feudal system.

Those who accepted as ideal the celibate condition can hardly be blamed for having attempted with such eloquence as they had to plead its cause. Authoritarian reformers, then as always, found it easy to believe that, whether or not people liked it, others should accept what they themselves were convinced was right. And when one passed from ideal to practical considerations, neither the papacy, which in aspiration controlled all lands of all Christian institutions, nor the lay princes, who in practice disposed of them, were willing to see these lands begin to pass from father to son, like any secular fief, and thus escape the remunerative control of one, and the aspiring ambition of the other.

It is probably true that a parochial clergy, allowed at this time to marry, would gradually have appropriated as their private property the parish property under their control. No one in power, from the bishops to the princes, or to the pope if one mounts in a different line, wished to see this come about. So the poor priests lost their one opportunity to regularize their lives, until the Reformation divided the clergy of western Europe into a celibate and a married body. For what was in the tenth century desirable neither to lay nor ecclesiastical princes, later came to be plainly contrary to the interest of the papacy, even aside from the feudal system. We shall see how the papacy was to learn, from the early beginnings of a reform soon to be instigated, that the more completely it could divorce its clergy from any other affectional or material tie, the more completely it could devote them to the Papal See.

So, in the tenth century, the Western Church decided definitely for celibacy. To be sure there was a moment of doubt about it during the period of reform under Gregory VII; and it was hardly before the thirteenth century that the attempt to enforce at least a public appearance of celibacy was anything approaching universal, but the last opportunity was lost for clergy who might wish to marry. From the time of the Gregorian reforms of the eleventh century the tide was to run more and more strongly against any possibility of a married clergy being even considered. To be sure, not only where the Reformation touched, but even later in the attempt to institute a "Constitutional" Catholic church during the French Revolution, clergy both took and were given the privilege of marrying. For the Roman Church, however, there was left but the task of establishing a routine and mission for a celibate clergy, broader and of wider contacts than those borrowed from asceticism, and of arranging for such instincts as could not be controlled.

# BOOK V

# FORMATION OF MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY

# XXVII

For long there was a romantic legend, popular particularly with nineteenth-century historians, to the effect that, as the year 1000 approached, people began so generally to expect the end of of the world that the habitual energies and ambitions of mankind in Europe were suspended while, numb with fear and despair, they flocked to the churches, praying to be spared in the coming catastrophe. About this conception many facts were grouped to color the imagined drama of a world spellbound in expectation of its final judgment. Supporting facts were not too difficult to find. Some were chanting, to be sure:

> Hear, ye Lands, hear ye depths of the sea,
> Hear, oh Man, hear all that lives underneath the sun:
> The day of ultimate wrath approaches, is near! [1]

Monks were copying, in expectation of the last judgment, a manuscript written two centuries earlier voicing similar expectations at the end of the eighth century.[2] There were, in short, currents of belief that the world was approaching its end. So had there been in other centuries, and so were there still to be. They were doubtless a little exaggerated at the end of the tenth century. *One thousand* was a good round number. The Psalmist had sung of Jehovah:

> A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday,
> Since it is gone like a watch in the night.[3]

But the books of the period, the proceedings of church councils, the papal bulls, seem ignorant of such expectations.[4] A comet's baleful prophecy is seen fulfilled in the burning of a church consecrated to the Archanged Michael;[5] feudal society "still went on dreaming of smashing blows to be dealt and great conquests to be achieved,"[6] while ecclesiastics went on building monasteries, seeking endowments for them, and building very solid churches.

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[1] This hymn, an anticipation of the great medieval hymn of Thomas of Celano (Dies Irae) calls attention to the fact that some in the thirteenth century had similar anticipations.

[2] Male, *L'Art Religieux du XII$^e$ Siècle en France,* 4.

[3] Psalm XC. 4.

[4] De Rochemaure, *Gerbert, Sylvestre II,* 488-526.

The outlook of Christianity was, when all was taken together, a strange mixture of hopeful and despairing signs. The tenth century had been a period of expansion for this religion. The Normans, when finally it was embraced by one of their most far-traveled romantic marauding heroes, finally accepted Christianity. The Bulgarians and Russians had succumbed. At the end of the tenth century the Hungarian Stephen carried on diplomatic correspondence with the Pope, and Hungary became a Christian realm.[7] In the later tenth century also, a new line of emperors came to power, more vigorous and aspiring, with intellectual enthusiasms added. In France too the Carolingians were supplanted, and in this the Church, though not the papacy, played an important rôle.

None the less, the "juvenile enthusiasm"[8] of Charlemagne's time quickly dissipated, the world's religious aspirations, its moral and intellectual ideals as well, were laid almost entirely upon the shoulders of monks. The papacy, the "rule of women" ended, was continually involved in subservient instability, with the Emperor, if not with the citizenry of Rome. Bishops for the most part made no pretension toward being other than the lay lords. The monasteries were the one "city set upon a hill" for all Western Christendom. In so far as people were susceptible of moral shock, here might they first become pained in conscience over the depravity of the times. "Alas, alas! Where have I rested my hope of salvation? . . . If the monastery is lost, who anywhere can be saved?"[9] So Peter Damiani imagines some layman to cry.

Next in order came the secular clergy, who were also supposed to set an example, since the authorities of Angers, in the ninth century, decreed that habitual drunkenness and debauchery at table was to be punished by forty days penance, if a bishop, a bishop's servant, priest, or deacon, and but thirty days if a layman.[10] Nevertheless exactions in this respect could not have been fastidious. In explaining the injunction against clerics gaining their sustenance from sources vile and base, an official canonic rubric states that they should not act as pimps or providers for prostitutes, nor should they keep inns and taverns.[11]

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[5] Raoul Glaber, *Chroniques,* 60.

[6] *Cambridge Medieval History,* III, 456.

[7] The papacy attempted to make a papal fief of this kingdom.

[8] Halphen, *Les Barbares,* 267, so describes the intellectual enthusiasms. The term is of still broader applicability.

[9] Damiani, *Opuscula,* XII, chap. x.

As a matter of fact monks and clerics mingled with the world for the most part freely enough, and were doubtless often not the worse for it, since the cloister had so many pests of its particular own.[12] In many monasteries where the ascetic ideal was still maintained the reading of books other than the Scriptures was discouraged. When an inquiring monkish student imprudently opened the works of Virgil to read, he dreamed the following night of a beautiful vase, from which darted hissing serpents. Old monastic libraries in many places accumulated dust, while brooding monks, who might see the Devil, seated grinning at the foot of their bed, "with skinny neck, sunken cheeks, eyes very black, narrow wrinkled forehead, flat nose, enormous mouth, swollen lips, chin short and receding, the beard of a goat, straight disordered hair, pointed skull, humpbacked and dressed in dirty garments," [13] came to find profound ignorance as pleasant to the soul as is sleep to the body.[14]

Belief in miracle was encouraged. Salvation itself was largely a miracle worked by priests, the purity of these miracle-working hands was peculiarly affected. Penance might reinstate a priest or prelate habitually lax with respect to his celibate vows, but one who had been twice married was beyond the bounds of any period of penance to fit him for the priesthood.[15] God himself might take revenge in strange ways, were one lacking in due respect for an important festal ceremony.[16]

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[10] Firebaugh, *Inns of the Middle Ages,* quoted this enactment.

[11] Migne, LIX. (This is an enactment of the Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1070. The keeping of inns and taverns on church and monastic property was however no rarity in the West, and the character of inns was such as to link the two prohibitions closely.)

[12] Damiani, in his *Liber Gomorrhianus,* catalogues in order of vileness certain monastic aberrations.

[13] So the chronicler Raoul Glaber *saw* the Devil, *Chronica,* V, ii.

[14] Gebhard, *Moines et Papes,* 13.

[15] Damiani, *Opuscula,* XI, xii.

Out of a period of disorder difficult for us to comprehend the Middle Ages were to shape a civilization. In a chaotic state all the elements were now present. It was much more a period of naïve experiment than of social decadence. The forces and interest which were to determine the forms of medieval civilization were not yet consolidated, but all the complex human psychology was there, still more complex, because not yet regimented into definite marching order. If it be true, as one is tempted often to believe, that never in the history of mankind has human psychology exhibited such variety, complexity, and profusion as through the gamut of the Middle Ages; still more is it true during the tenth and early eleventh centuries, when humanity, dreaming of heaven with its feet in a sewer, banning sexuality on the threshold of a brothel, a sword in one hand and a cross in the other, not at all squeamish at the sight of blood, yet with capacities of tenderness in sturdy males which the delicate modern woman scarcely touches, shook lice from its clothing, to turn miraculously to pearls ere they touched the ground.[17]

There are two men, whose characters or aims scarcely touch in anything but the fact that they were both important ecclesiastical figures, who can perhaps give us an idea of the still unordered range of human aspiration, under guidance or cover of the Christian institution, as well as we can compass it briefly: Gerbert, who became pope as Sylvester II, just at the end of the tenth century, and Peter Damiani, born just about the time of Gerbert's death, their two active lives together thus extending roughly from 960 to 1060.

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[16] "In urbe Namnetica miraculum grande factum est, quod minime oblivioni tradire voluimus, sed, sicut videntes illud nobis scribentibus enarraverunt, huic paginae scriptum commendare studuimus. Nam, quum omnis populus praedictae cicitatis, gaudens et exultans, ad ecclesiam Sancti Johannis Baptistae, in ipsius nativitate convenisset et ibi pernoctens in orationibus et vigiliis fidelissime celebrasset, fuit unus miles ex familia Judacaelis comitis, Nominoius nomine, qui, instinctu diaboli deceptus, hujus sanctissimi praecursoris vigilias dimisit, ac furtive cum quadam meretrice juxta sepes cujusdam horti, viae publicae proximas, infelissime se commiscuit. Et, quum pacto suae libidinis scelere, ab eadem discedere vellet, divino judicio Dei illico captus, sicut canis, ibidem remansit commixtus. Coeuntesque ambo par totam noctem, exinde steterunt ibi jacentes, donec dies illuxisset, ibique mane reperti ab omni populo, ad ecclesiam pergente et egrediente, sic mirabiliter stare videbantur. Et, quum hic lacrimentabiliter condolentes, per totam diem misericordiam Domini et sancti Johannis Baptistae invocantes, ut eis paccatoribus misereri dignarentur, usque ad solis occasum sic commixti stetissent, Dei voluntate soluti sunt, venientesque utrique valde pavidi as ecclesiam Sancti Johannis, per totam noctem ibi orantes, Dominum assiduae precati sunt ut peccata sui illis infelicibus sua bratuita bonitate dimitteret. Quumque autem dies reluxisset, a clericis illius ecclesiae acerrime caesi et verbis correctionis castigati, regressi sunt, tamen ex eo tempore usque ad finem vitae suae semper verrecundi." *Chronicle of Nantes* (about 1050), last lines.

[17] Such a miraculous story is indeed told of a saintly man, the sleeves of whose gown were seen to move, because of the vermin in their folds. But when the folds were turned down, it was pearls that those about saw fall to the ground from them.

Gerbert was born in Auvergne, the old Gallic center of France, of the poorest parentage, his father a serf of the Benedictine abbey of Aurillac. He attracted the attention of the abbot, and from early boyhood was educated in the abbey. Here he was initiated into the mysteries of the *trivium,* the primary group of the *seven arts* under which the curriculum of medieval education was classified. This trivium was constituted of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic. Grammar meant much what it means to-day to an American student of Latin in a secondary school. The essentials of grammar were learned, rules and paradigms committed to memory. Selections from classic authors were read and analyzed grammatically. An ambitious student, limited only by the rarity of books, might read more than the selections set for him to read. Rhetoric was a copy-book method of teaching literary composition. Textbooks dated from ancient classical times, and had been composed or inspired by professional orators. For every type of literary composition there were *models.* Einhard, Charlemagne's first biographer, followed even into small details the biographical framework of Suetonius' biographies of the Cæsars. Dialectic meant a study of logic, based largely upon the former part of Aristotle's logical works. Of this Gerbert confesses he learned little or nothing at Aurillac.

When Gerbert was twenty there came an opportunity to go to that part of southern Spain which in the tenth century was a part of the Duchy of Aquitaine (loosely speaking, of France). Here he was near the Arab culture of Spain, and branched out into the four studies which completed the medieval curriculum, known as the *quadrivium.* The quadrivium, Boethius had written in the sixth century, had to do with quantity. It consisted of arithmetic, quantity in its essential nature; music, quantity related to measure; geometry, moveless quantity; and astronomy, moving quantity. One need not insist upon this definition of the subject matter of the four *arts* in question, as what immediately is of interest is the fact that Gerbert learned, while in the south of Spain, more about arithmetic and astronomy than even the learned in his own country knew, and acquired a taste for the study of medicine. Tradition long credited him with having introduced into Europe the use of the so-called *arabic numerals,* but this is now disputed, if not disproved. Astronomy meant largely geography and what we would call astrology.

The next stage of his career took him to Rome, where he was presented to the pope, who in turn sent him to the emperor. He became tutor to the future emperor, Otto II, then begged to be released, that he might go to Rheims to learn dialectic at the famous school there. Of this school Gerbert soon became the head, "teaching all he knew to his students, and employing all his leisure to learn what he did not know," as he writes in a letter.

The religious zeal of Gerbert was never conspicuous, but his appetite for learning, and his zest for book-collecting were omnivorous.

> Procure me the History of Julius Caesar. . . . The philosopher Demostheses wrote a book on the diseases and treatment of the eyes. . . . I want the beginning of it; also the end of Cicero *Pro Rego Deitaro*. . . . Send me a good copy of the *Achilleus* of Statius. . . .

Such requests went broadcast to his friends and connections.

The time came when he should begin to feather his nest. He sought preferment from the emperor, and was made Abbot of Bobbio. This abbey, founded by Columba, was one of the most important in Italy, and should have possessed, he might well have expected, an excellent library. He swore vassalage to the emperor, took up residence, only to find the abbey in disorder and its property largely dissipated by an easy-going abbot.

Attempting to set things right, himself a foreigner, he was soon unpopular with his monks, and the nobles round about, who had bitten off generous slices of the abbey's property. The emperor lent him no assistance, and eventually he found it wiser to withdraw, without however resigning his office.

Returning to Rheims, he became secretary to the archbishop, by reason of that office Chancellor of the Realm of France. Lothair, the king, was a man of decent enough impulses, but crude, impulsive, and hot-headed. Gerbert soon perceived that a certain Hugh Capet, Duke of France, was a coming man. The death of Lothair, together with other political circumstances, put the archbishop, Gerbert close at his ear and elbow, into the position of raising this Hugh Capet to the throne of France. Then the archbishop died, suggesting Gerbert as his successor. Politics indicated another choice to the French king. Gerbert was disappointed, but not discouraged. He accepted his old office, under the new archbishop, whose character was such that it was not difficult to get him unseated ere much time had elapsed. Now Gerbert became archbishop, seated without papal approval by a council of French prelates. This election placed Gerbert in the position of standing for the rights of bishops and Church synods, as against claims of papal supremacy later to become prominent.

As Archbishop of Rheims Gerbert was soon in another controversy, again in a position counter to the papal policies to take form soon after his death. In two different dioceses, monks horn-locked with their bishops, appealed to him for a word of sustenance. He refused to interfere against the episcopal power, earning in revenge an eternal hatred from monks.

The papacy had chosen to remain silent while Gerbert's predecessor was deposed, and he was seated. However the precedent was dangerous, and the province of Rheims had already a bad name with the papal curia, as the center of antipapal claims. In the end the curia was in a nasty situation. Not wishing to uphold a profligate prelate, such as Gerbert's predecessor, they had even less disposition to allow a council of French prelates to unseat, without papal sanction, the most prominent prelate in France.

The best thing to do was to do nothing, except gesture, and leave the matter undecided. Gerbert had been driven from his palace, and was at once an abbot without an abbey, and an archbishop without an archbishopric. Then, while Gerbert was refuged in Italy with the emperor, the Archbishop of Ravenna died. Without settling anything as to the validity of the Rheims election, Gerbert was made Archbishop of Ravenna.

Less than a year later the same emperor who had made him Archbishop of Ravenna made him pope, as Sylvester II. His papacy was however short, and accomplished nothing which need detain us. The papacy had indeed less than little for which to thank him, and it is as the most brilliant scholar of the tenth century that he is most often known. What, indeed, save the fact that Gerbert was a monk, an abbot, a priest, an archbishop, finally a pope, has all this to do with religion? Gerbert worried when he found what material conditions surrounded the feudal fief he had obtained at Bobbio. He worried when all his savings, invested in real estate in Rheims, were endangered by his expulsion. He might fume about delay in getting a manuscript he desired. One does not find him worrying about the state of his soul, nor preoccupied with anxiety as to the state of other people's souls.

Gerbert was born a rationalist, a very Frenchman, whose guiding maxim was, "One must desire what he can attain, if he cannot attain what he desires." He was a scholar and a statesman, not even in pretension a saint.

What perhaps, aside from the insight into the relations of Church and State afforded by glancing at his career, most causes him to throw light upon the atmosphere of his time, is the fact that he was not anathematized until after his death. The legends which later grew up around him are not less enlightening than the facts of his career. He was later supposed to have, not only sold, like Faust, his soul to the Devil, for the possession of all knowledge; but to have gained magical secrets in Cordova, by a combination of theft and amorous intrigue.

Such notoriety was entirely posthumous. He was hailed, at his election as pope, as the greatest intellectual light of his time. The later legends, contrasted with this fact, remind us that, at the end of the tenth century, the pursuit of knowledge had not yet been regulated, its subject matter had not yet been subordinated to the conceived purpose of rational inquiry in the full Middle Ages; an enlightened faith. The real Gerbert represents both the secular ambitions of the Church, and its aim to include all knowledge in one or another of its ordered categories. The legendary Gerbert, like a grinning gargoyle pushed outside to spout dirty water from the gutters of a cathedral, is a sort of ecclesiastical revenge against humanity, for being broader in its scope of aspiration than the organized medieval scheme of salvation.

The character of Peter Damiani presents quite another picture. If one wishes to see the worst that the most aberrant elements of medieval religion could do to a soul possessed of a poet's imagination and delicacy; a clarity and purity of zeal which we can hardly appreciate without putting him in his environment, and comparing him with such a one as Gregory VII; a will stronger than iron, because it might more humanly bend to serve, though never relaxing the austerity with which it held to its scarcely human aim, Peter Damiani is worthy of attention.

Between Francis of Assisi, incidentally bestowing kisses upon outcast lepers, and Peter Damiani, welting his already bruised back with still more flagellant blows, there can be little doubt as to which of these two poets, at the same time aspiring saints, presents the more attractive picture. Perhaps the difference between the times in which these two men lived accounted for more than we might immediately imagine. At all events, Damiani was a poet. One should begin with that.

Who, on my door in the night
  is rapping to shatter my slumber?
  He calls me, "Virgin most fair,
  Wife, Sister, Jewel of splendor complete,
  open quickly, My Sweet.

"It is I, the Son of the Highest King,
The First and the Last;
from the skies to the shadows here I come,
the spirits of sin-slaved men to free
by my death, and the insults offered to me."

Swiftly my little cot is left,
to throw back the bolt I run.
My house be open to my Delight;
by deepest *me* let him scrutinize
to the plenitude of his seeing eyes!

Too late! He has passed and gone;
he has left my door;
and what of unhappy me, or what to do?
In tears I hasten to follow and find
the youth whose fingers molded mankind.[18]

This poem is a little drama, compact with action and feeling, from the startled awakening to the moment of distressed and passionate pursuit, with tense listening and joyous active response between. There is no mellifluous flow of words, no Virgilian polish; but there are strong words, words which leave concrete images, there is passion, lively and romantic.

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[18] Quis est qui pulsat ad ostium
Noctes rumpens somnium?
Me vocat o virginum pulcherrima,
Soror, conjux, gemma splendissima:
Cito surgens aperi, dulchissima.

Ego sum summi Regis Filius,
Primus et novissimus,
Qui de coelis in has veni tenebras
Liberare captivorum animas
Passus morten et multae injurias.

Mox ego dereliqui lectulum,
Cucurri ad pessulum
Ut dilecto tota domus pateat
Et meus mea plenissime videat
Quem maxime videre desiderat.

At ille jam inde transierat,
Ostium reliquierat.
Quod ego miserrima, quid faciem?
Lacrymando sum secuta juvenum
Manus cujus plasmeverunt hominem.
*Preces et Carmina,* LXII.

In the works of Damiani this poem has a fifth stanza. Remi de Gourmont, who chose to include this poem in his work *Le Latin Mystique,* gives but these four stanzas, and to omit the fifth seems better to the author also, as the poem is complete and better without it. In primary significance it refers to the Virgin, and her son (become her lover) one presumes. In secondary mystic significance it represents the Christian soul generally.

For this strange monk was not a poet only, but deep in him, deeper perhaps than any other thing, he was a lover; a thwarted lover, who could not blind his sharp eyes to grace and loveliness. He admonishes his monks not to leave their cloisters, for when they do they will bring back hundreds of memories which will haunt them, even when they are at their prayers.[19] He writes to a young countess, at the beginning of a letter full of Christian admonitions:

> Alas my wretched heart, which cannot remember scriptural mysteries a hundred times repeated, yet will not let loose the memory of a form seen only once![20]

He could not say, with another passionate lover of beauty, that beauty was truth, truth beauty; which was all one knew on earth or needed to know.[21] Beauty was not truth; beauty was heaven, where the Blessed Virgin reigned as queen. All the contemplative element of this lover's passion he determinedly forced in that direction; no pain or sacrifice was too great which he believed would prepare him for the lively participation in the expected life of joy and beauty; and all the active effective energy of his affectional nature turned with the same vigor to make as many as possible of his fellow men and women sharers of it with him. He worked passionately, single-mindedly, to save souls. Papal programs, whether he might or might not be called upon to aid in them, were always of secondary importance compared with this. To be a cardinal-bishop, that particular cardinal-bishop whose prerogative it was to consecrate the popes, became worse than nothing to him, when he found that the temporal cares of this office interfered with his task of saving the souls of those placed under his care.

And Damiani had this again to raise his vision above his envisaging world, to seek joy and beauty in some later existence, that his mind was keen. Before the passion for monastic austerities seized him, he had won rapid distinction for his intellectual gifts. He had the vision and the sharp tongue of the born social satirist. No pompous sham could deceive him. He chastised his own tongue as scurrilous,[22] and addressed Gregory VII as "Saint Satan." He served the *reform* element of the Gregorian program. No social vice, no departure from the ideal that lay beneath all this medieval attempt after salvation, escaped his eye or comment. Nor was it hidden from him that, behind all the zeal for reform, the Roman thirst for power was always working out its own ends.

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[19] *Opuscula,* XII, 32.

[20] *Epistulae,* XVIII.

[21] Keats, "Ode to a Grecian Urn."

Yet, strangely enough, so intensely did he set aside the forms in which his spiritual visions were enrolled, that, in a matter of policy all-important to the unified clerical power which the papacy was determinedly seeking, he served them better than the most scholarly diplomat of his time, the Cardinal Humbert. When the clerical abuses of avarice and lust were much in the foreground, Humbert was inclined to believe that sacraments conferred by simoniac of fornicating clerics were invalid. It was however the opinion of Damiani, who held that the priest was but the vehicle, in no sense the source, of sacramental benefits, that his own personal qualifications were of no influence upon the blessings conferred by his hands, which was soon perceived to be the more serviceable theory. It would scarcely have been wise or safe to have allowed seeds of doubt to sprout broadcast in the minds of Christians, who were dependent upon the clerical ministrations of persons whose hands could so obviously add nothing to the sanctity of sacraments they conferred. Even the adoption of Damiani's theory, as we shall see, could not ward off anticlerical popular heresy.

The Peter Damiani who has been so described is one who might be imagined to have developed in several different directions. The actual Peter Damiani presents in addition the revolting picture of one who indulged, and urged others to indulge, in violent self-flagellations. When, some centuries later, large bands of fanatic flagellants wandered in penitential pilgrimage through parts of Europe, the movement was already more generally frowned upon. Not so with Peter Damiani. He is convinced that God will look down upon it as a joyful and excellent sight, pleased that men were so punishing themselves that He would be spared part of His task of punishing them.[28] This self-castigation was supposed to be an imitation of Jesus' suffering. Strange deformation, which sought analogy between the welting of one's own back, and the insults and death of a man put out of the way because some important people did not like the kind of things he said!

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[22] One suspects from the letter that this tongue was also sometimes witty, sometimes even gay, *Epistolae,* V, ii.

The flagellation of Peter Damiani would be a matter of less importance, were he a man of different potentialities. The aberrations of sick nerves and sick souls are in general not so significant. That he could have gone about the world, his eyes seeing the sores of society, looking upon the most natural human nature as itself little better than a sore; that he could have for years inflicted such pain upon his poor body, and still remain a healthy spirited human being, is of course impossible. The wonder was that he remained, despite it all, as much a man as he did. One runs through pages of his works to realize that, despite strangely warped categories and twisted human values, he saw much, and saw with a clarity which, everything considered, was remarkable.

The important thing to remember, perhaps, is that he was not, as such a man might be to-day, a mere neurotic, masochistic freak. He was the exponent, with terrible logic, of ideas and values generally approved by people who were, however, more willing to let him exemplify them, than to do so themselves. When flagellation appeared again an aroma of decadence, a haunting lack of confidence, had begun to spread. In Damiani's time the world was crude and cruel. It was to leave much of this behind before, with a somewhat different spirit, it turned again to imitate him.

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[28] "O quam jucundum! O quam insigne spectaculum!" God is imagined to exclaim, *Opuscula,* XLIII, vi.

# XXVIII

Although the year 1000 has been chosen to mark the end of the dark ages of feudal dissolution, and the beginning of reforming struggles which were to dominate the eleventh, until they made of the twelfth century the most religious of all Christian centuries, such precisely dated epochs do not exist in history. The tenth century was still young when the reform movement began, in some few cloisters of the Benedictine Order, and it was in one of these cloisters that Gerbert received his early education. These monastic reforms were destined to extend their influence until, in a renewed fervor of piety, reformed monasticism began to draw to itself a generous proportion of the most intelligent and vigorous, among these also a generous portion of the well-born. Now at last, with this impetus behind its cautious, but always persistent policy, the long-since formulated claims of papal supremacy began to unfold in vigorous action.

This movement gained little momentum from the few Benedictine monasteries which here and there were visited by zeal for more consistent living. As we have seen, each Benedictine community was independent of every other one. There was no central authority (beyond the accident of an occasional reforming bishop) to carry to a second monastery aspirations toward enforcement of the Rule which might move some individual abbot to clean his own house. As a matter of fact bishops were as likely to be obstacles to reform as otherwise, and it was in perceiving and combating equivocal episcopal control that the early movement of reform in the Benedictine community was most effective.

The real tide of reform, about to broaden into an ambitious policy of unifying the Church and centralizing its control and government, flowed from the abbey of Cluny, a new foundation, from its institution free from episcopal control, and under the direct supervision of the pope.

Cluny was founded in 910. For long its direct relationship to the pope was of no broad significance, save in the negative sense of its freedom from local interference. But in 926 the Abbey of Cluny chose as its abbot one Odo, later to be made a saint, and the first of a line of efficient and distinguished abbots under whom its influence spread until, at the climax of its power, in the twelfth century, this abbey ruled 2000 priories.

At the outset this movement was one solely of moral reform, and confined to monks. The aim was to reëstablish the Benedictine Rule in the spirit of its founder. The order was in no sense orientated toward the gaining or exercise of influence of political complexion. But the edifying example of a community of monks really attempting to realize the monastic ideal appears to have had a drawing power comparable to that of the fourth and fifth centuries. Soon many young men, or older ones who had already tasted secular life, flocked to Cluny, many from the most prominent feudal families.

The community began its extension by the formation of small priories, to house its overflow, upon manors belonging to the abbey and situated round about. Soon every abbey, or every bishop or noble, with aspirations toward reform, began to call upon Cluny to undertake the task. To facilitate this, in 931 the abbey was granted the special privilege, by the pope, of keeping under its control, not the surrounding priories only, but whatever other abbeys it was given the task of reforming. Some were forced under its rule. From this time there was but one Abbot of Cluny, and all the subordinate houses were under *priors*.[1]

This extension of power by no means took place without opposition. Stones and other projectiles were hurled at Odo himself, when he arrived to set one abbey in order. Another Cluniac representative was killed by the monks of the abbey to which he was sent. None the less the movement seized the popular imagination, and having gained a measure of headway, it spread rapidly, monasteries of the community of Cluny dotting, not the valleys of Burgundy alone, but Aquitaine, the valley of the Loire, Provence, Italy, first the north and then the south, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Spain, and England.

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[1] As a special concession the heads of some important abbeys were allowed to keep their title, but they were none the less, in function, no longer the heads of their monasteries.

The cleft between the *religious* and *secular* clergy widened, as monasticism erected a stronger, more unified barrier against the world. The secular clergy were likened to Martha, "anxious and disturbed about many things," whereas the monks might say to Christ, proudly with Peter, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." [2]

Yet the community, in its corporate capacity, had not quite left everything. On the contrary it gathered in a large proportion of the monastic riches of Europe. Nor could they, even from the beginning, keep altogether out of ecclesiastical politics. In France, the community of Cluny having been freed from episcopal disciplinary control, refused to acknowledge any rights of the bishops; denied them in prominent abbeys, even the hospitality of a night's lodging, imposed the tithes on their own account which previously the bishops had received, collected for the treasury of Cluny special offerings and gifts which had before gone naturally to the bishops. The bishops were still the fountainhead of that Gallicanism in the Church, inherited from Carolingian times, and this conflict of interest pushed the Cluniac movement more and more to the side of the pope.

In Italy too, for a little different reason, Cluny drew close to the pope. The Carolingian and Saxon emperors tended to put Germans upon the episcopal thrones of Italy, whereas the monks were predominantly Italians. So here the community of Cluny became a bulwark to strengthen the century-long hatred of German rule.[3]

[2] Both these quotations are used by Abbon of Fleury, in a work of his called *Apologeticus.*

[3] Between 950 and 1000 there are known to have been forty-seven German bishops in Italy. There may have been more. Similarly, as in the case when Gerbert was made Abbot of Bobbio, foreigners might be given Italian monasteries to rule by a German emperor.

In Germany there was a similar result, of different political source. In 936 the imperial power passed from the Carolingians to a line of Saxons, the first of whom, Otto I, unseated the pope John XII, the last of the House of Marozia in papal power, and was also the first imperial patron of Gerbert. At Otto's accession the imperial power had been weakened by the growth of power among certain ducal families. Against these houses Otto immediately began to make use of the episcopal princes. The Saxon lay nobles, few of them vassals of the emperor, had already despoiled the Church of much property. Monasteries were particularly easy prey, and the simplest means of avoiding general spoliation was for a monastery to put itself under the special protection of a single noble, who could despoil it more regularly and moderately himself, while protecting it from others.

In consequence Otto found the Church in Germany in great need of a protector, and by extending his favor to them he might gain allies in his struggle with the counts and dukes. Also he perceived that Church lands were, on the whole, more efficiently managed from the economic standpoint than lands of the lay nobles. For these two reasons he distributed lands generously to ecclesiastical corporations, at the same time mobilizing the economic resources of the Church for the benefit of the State. The properties of bishops and monasteries were required to furnish him with fighting men also, bishops and abbots not seldom choosing to lead their feudal forces into battle in person.[4]

Meanwhile bishops accumulated new powers and immunities. At the end of the tenth century the execution of justice within episcopal domains was in their power solely. But, as the lands of bishops could not be passed on by inheritance, this meant new power for the emperor, there being in Germany no pretense of choosing bishops by any other means than imperial appointment.[5] As a result of this policy not a few bishops came to be lords of entire counties, and a few great archbishops accumulated the principalities which were to enroll three of them later among the seven Electors of the emperor. In repercussion the bishops lost the local support of the lay lords, and were forced more closely into dependence upon the emperor. Then, in 1024, came an emperor who with entire cynicism used and sold prelacies for his own purposes and profit, almost without any religious pretense whatsoever.

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[4] Church lands contributed the largest part of the armies of the emperor in more than one campaign of the tenth century. See Thompson, *Feudal Germany,* 39-40.

[5] Henry II, emperor from 1002, founded a school to train bishops of his chosen sort.

Not long before the accession of this emperor (Henry II) the Cluniac movement entered Germany. Monasteries had profited far less than bishops by the generosity of the Saxon house, and Cluny entered Germany already conscious of its political power, and of its rôle to play with the papacy. It was therefore a power to be wielded, when the proper moment arrived, by any pope who chose resolutely to attack the emperor's control of ecclesiastical patronage.

Toward the middle of the eleventh century a single bishop of western Europe found courage to raise his voice against the secular control of bishops. When Henry III called the Archbishop of Ravenna before an assembly of bishops, at Aix la Chapelle, confronted with certain charges, the Bishop of Liége, prepared by a study of the false *Decretals of Isidore* and the canons generally, kept silence while all the others pressed upon the emperor the opinion they knew him to desire. Urged to state his opinion he said, "We owe to the pontiff obedience, to you, oh King, feudal fidelity. . . . In my opinion, which I loudly affirm, the faults of ecclesiastical nature which he (the Archbishop under charge) has committed, are for the sole judgment of the sovereign pontiff. If, on the contrary, he has been guilty of infidelity or negligence in secular affairs, without question it is for you to demand his punishment." [6] Here it was now first clearly stated that all the movements and forces directed toward religious reform were properly a part of the papal arsenal.

Thinking of the medieval Church in its completed form it does not appear that these words should have fallen strangely upon the ears of anyone present. That the pope represented, as Peter's lineal descendant, the unity of the Catholic Church, and was in some sense supreme over it, had been generally accepted now for centuries. But the precise nature of this supremacy was by no means a matter yet clearly defined. Long before the crowning of Charlemagne Western Christendom had an idea of Christianity, made concrete in a legendary conception of the empire of Constantine. According to this legend, Christianity was a two-headed affair, in which were wielded two swords of authority, one by the Roman emperor, another by the pope. The emperor's place in this was clearer than that of the pope, since all the world knew that Constantine had enfranchised Christianity, and had been rewarded by being made a saint.

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[6] Flich, *La Reforme Gregorienne,* I, 114; also entire section 113-128.

In the eighth century there was, to be sure, no emperor in the West, but the imperial ideal remained alive, was kept alive by churchmen, who played a part, and perhaps the leading part, in arranging to have Charlemagne crowned emperor. The papacy does not appear to have gained much except protection from Charlemagne's assumption of the imperial title, nor even to have much gained in the dissolution of his empire. But the idea of papal supremacy was growing older, and even during the lowest ebb of papal prestige, the vice-regent of Peter came more and more to be a vague sanctity, to be reckoned with in various ways by different classes, and in different portions of Europe; often in direct proportion to the social or geographical distance of the class or district from the papal court.

The extinction of the Carolingian line removed some of the odor of sanctity from the imperial office; so did the establishment of the Capetian line in France, and the Normans in England. The growing power of the lay and ecclesiastical princes in Germany removed something more immediately effective than an odor of sanctity. The growth of the community of Cluny gave the papacy a united force behind it such as it had never possessed before. The words of the Bishop of Liége came at the psychological moment. Almost immediately concerted forces began to move in the direction of profiting by this suggestion. Not, however, until 1073 did papal supremacy become, as it were, incarnate in the person of a pope by election to that office of Hildebrand, who took the name of Gregory VII.

Few historical personages have caused more controversy and difference of opinion, as to underlying motives and essential quality of character, than this Hildebrand. Modern critical study of source material has also necessitated considerable modification of the general history of his epoch. It was long believed that the conception of papal power for which he most conspicuously stands developed in the community of Cluny, and that as a Cluniac monk Hildebrand had imbibed it. It is now clear that the ideas called Gregorian did not develop originally at Cluny, and that Hildebrand was not a Cluniac monk, perhaps not a monk at all.

Hildebrand was an Italian, born somewhere in Tuscany around 1030, and as a boy sent to Rome for education. The popes, their triumphs and adversities, their personal virtues or vices, the spectacular papal drama with its triangle plot, the popes, the emperors, the Roman citizenry the three protagonists—all the vivid contrast between an ideal ranging from the sublime to the merely grandiose, and an often sordid, always intrigue-underwoven reality—was the very pulse beat of Roman life. Whether or not Hildebrand was a monk, it was not monasticism, but Rome, that formed and fed his imagination.

During all the years when his influence grew at Rome, while fate or chance seemed several times to have intervened to keep him from ascending the papal throne himself, he labored in the growing movement to make the supremacy of Rome an actuality. When at last he became pope this attempt had become for him almost an obsession. Read some fifty of his letters, and note how the "power of Peter," or some statement amounting to that, is mentioned more times than the names either of God or Christ. He professed to have accepted the office of pope unwillingly, uses indeed the same Biblical quotation in two letters written to express his reluctance.[7] He showed, however, no reluctance to exercise the power. Since he was not a priest some delay was necessary before he could be consecrated pope. In this interim several important letters went off from the *pontiff elect,*[8] one even to the princes of Spain, reminding them that all of Spain, though troubled more than once by heresy, and cut off by infidel occupation, was still a vassal of the apostolic see.[9]

He lost no time, let pass no circumstance which might be wisely used to declare and make effective his program. In the third year of his papacy the program is indicated by twenty-seven propositions concerning the powers of the Papacy, inserted without comment among his diplomatic correspondence.[10]

These propositions may be summarized as follows:

> The Roman Church was founded by the Lord alone (1); the Roman pontiff only may be called universal (2), alone may depose and absolve bishops (3), even in their absence (5), and without a synodal assembly (25). He may ordain a cleric in any church whatsoever (14), and transfer a bishop from one see to another (13). He may erect new congregations, change the constitutional form of monastic communities, consolidate or divide bishoprics (7).
>
> The Roman Church has never been in error (22), its head should be judged by none (19), nor should his decisions be condemned by any person (20). Throughout the entire Church important matters should be referred to him (21).
>
> Without papal order no synod may be called *general* (16), no enactment or book may be called canonical (17), he may amend the decisions of all others (18), and his legate, in a synod or council, takes precedence of everyone present, and may in such an assembly, by his sole decision, pronounce a deposition (4).
>
> The Pope alone may use the imperial insignia (8), may depose emperors (12), and is the sole person whose feet all princes kiss (9). He may absolve feudal subjects from their oaths of vassalage (27), and with his authorization vassals may bring charges against their feudal lord (24).

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[7] *Register,* Epistles 1, 3.

[8] The first twelve letters of the papal *Register* precede his consecration.

[9] *Register,* I, vii.

[10] These propositions, under the title *Dictatus Papae,* appear between Letters LV and LVI in the *Register,* or collected diplomatic correspondence, of Gregory VII (Migne, CXLVIII, 407-408). The Gregorian authorship of these propositions has been questioned, with the Vatican manuscript of the *Register* in which they are found, but recent critical study reinstates its authenticity.

If ordained, according to canon, he becomes without question a saint (23). [This is the only proposition for which he stops to quote authority.[11]]

There is nothing to show that these propositions were ever publicly enunciated. It was doubtless hardly safe to do so, since several of them clearly controvened existent tradition. They were deduced from a conception of the power of the papacy, particularly in view of the conditions to be met, and lay down powers believed necessary to the pope to make good this supremacy. They were, as has been said, Gregory's doctrine. It was left to his assistants to find authority for them.[12]

Such a task was not easy, since revolutionary intentions were hidden in them. They left nothing standing of the traditional episcopal power, nor of the power of synods and councils. It was still believed, and still for centuries held, broadly within the Western Church, that the highest authority, in matters of faith or discipline, was a general council of the Church entire. Since it was left, in these propositions, for the Pope to decide what was a general council, the authority of such councils was swept away.

More than this, the authority of the whole line of Christian tradition was swept away (in theory going back to Adam and Eve, and supported by certain documentary evidence of which the most important was the Bible). The pope proposed to be the sole arbiter of valid Christian tradition.

This was not all. At least from the time of Charlemagne, Church and State had been, in theory, one. The division of authority might be a matter of controversy, but here all controversy is cut short by claiming complete ultimate authority for the pope. Not only must all princes kiss his feet, but he also claims power to dissolve all feudal obligations binding vassal and lord. Peter's legendary power to "bind or loose" aspires to extend itself to the ultimate obligations of contemporary political organization.

Such claims could not then have been spread openly before the eyes of the world, since many who were ready to accept generally the *idea* of papal supremacy, would have balked at such relentless logic. Hidden in the papal archives they might, most probably did, direct specific actions suited to provide valuable precedents when later needed, without revealing the ultimate purpose of direction of the acts. With a unity of purpose which these propositions help to clarify, Gregory pounced here and there upon situations in which he might interpose with reasonable safety, thundering in case of moral scandal, where disinterested respectable citizens would uphold him, setting up theoretical claims in softer tones where the time for thunder had not yet arrived.

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[11] The numbers refer to the number of the proposition referred to, in the *Dictatus Papae.*

[12] Flich, *La Reforme Gregorienne,* II, 193. This work is published by the University of Louvain.

The very best entering wedge was given by flagrant disobedience to canons and vows concerning the celibacy of monks and secular clergy. Many priests still wished to be allowed to marry; a few bishops openly allowed them to do so. It is not even certain Gregory himself did not contemplate the necessity of allowing this generally at one time. This indeed he might have safely done, had enough of the proper sort of public opinion been behind him. The important matter for the moment was not what sort of reforms should be undertaken, but rather that all reforms be undertaken under the direct injunction of the apostolic see.

It was, however, another abuse which went to the root of the papal aims: simony. This reform had also its popular appeal. People were able to see the impropriety of buying and selling spiritual offices. Even princes with the disposal of ecclesiastical benefices might hesitate to directly sell them, while none the less using their power by choosing such prelates as would be friendly to their interests. The original definition of simony must be enlarged, so that, if any interests were to be served in the choice of prelates, it should be the interests of the papal see. It was fortunate for the papacy that simoniac bishops were on the average likely to be the worst sort from the standpoint of Christian idealism; probably true also that those chosen by Gregory would more often have found approval from Christian idealism of the period. But what was all important was that bishops, if they must have vices, would be confined to such as did not contravene papal supremacy.

It was this extension of the definition of simony, implying that simony was inherent in any ecclesiastical appointment brought about by lay influence, which occasioned the long struggle between popes and emperors, known as the contest over lay investiture, centering on the side of the lay princes, in the imperial house of the Hohenstauffen.

The first act of this long struggle was to take place not long after the formulation of these propositions, between Gregory and the Emperor Henry IV. The great *scène à faire* of this drama was the penitential pilgrimage of the latter to Canossa (1077) to obtain absolution from the pope and removal of the bann of excommunication which had been pronounced against him.

As a matter of fact the importance of Canossa is symbolic rather than practical. Henry IV had attempted first to ignore then to depose Gregory, who had begun in earnest to combat the imperial right to make ecclesiastical appointments. For a time Henry had gained considerable support from prelates who were his creatures. But the bann of excommunication was a serious matter. An emperor who was cut off from the Church, Henry soon found, was no emperor at all. The prelates did not dare follow such an emperor. However, if the pope might condemn, the popular Christian conscience demanded that he pardon a penitent. Gregory kept Henry waiting three days at the castle gates of Canossa. He could hardly have been unaware of the fact that, once having pardoned the emperor, his power over him was all but lost. So indeed it happened. The papacy of Gregory ended, the pope himself in exile, deserted by several of his closest former Roman associates, and with few supporters in the Germany which had so effectively assisted him to force Henry to the gates of Canossa.

Before the eleventh century had closed, two other European monarchs, the kings of France and of England, had suffered excommunication, the latter clearly upon the question of investiture. Early in the twelfth century a compromise was arranged, first in France, then in the Empire, according to which investiture was divided into a sacred and a secular part, given respectively to pope and monarch. This was no theoretical settlement of the difficulty involved, and the formulation, on the one side, of canon law, on the other the revived study of Roman law, again sharpened the lines of opposition. What actually solved, more than any other thing, the difficulty, was a revival of religious enthusiasm, with the coming of the twelfth century, which increased the influence of the papacy upon more legitimate ground; the growth of a more ordered and peaceful Europe, under fewer and stronger princes; more complex and intelligent diplomacy winning battles without thundering extravagant claims. Finally, the rise and consolidation of nations, the growth of a middle-class influence, sapped at the foundations of feudal power, and the whole question of investitures came to be of comparatively slight importance. It is however unsafe to assume that an atom of the Gregorian program has ever been definitely renounced by the See of Rome. Policy is one thing, precedent another. It is often most serviceable to an institution looking upon its future as contemporaneous with the future of the world to let time, rather than definite decision, settle things; for who knows what precedent, all but useless to-day, will some time again fall upon a moment most fitting for its open and thundered reappearance?

## XXIX

CHRISTIANITY, during the few centuries when it existed alongside the pagan culture, remained, even after the conversion of Constantine, an element extraneous to that culture. The ordered material of knowledge, the imaginative images and conventions with which the poetic mind was accustomed to work, all the deeper though more chaotic content of the folk-consciousness had rooted and taken from under influences alien to Christianity. So it may be stated with considerable truth, also as a way of making clearer what has just been said, that Christianity was a way of life that won adherents as a means of saving people from their own traditional culture. It was a religion as deeply hostile to its environment as is to-day its environment deeply hostile to it. There is of course this difference, that Christianity was then the triumphing outsider, pushing the deep-rooted civilization centuries old into an always more contracted corner, whereas, during the centuries immediately preceding our own a civilization pattern not less alien to Christianity as it developed during its first ten centuries than was the pagan world has been steadily pushing not only this, but all religions generally, into a similarly more and more contracted corner of its daily life and habitual modes of thought.

Midway between these two situations lie the Middle Ages, during which was slowly building, and then imperceptibly dissipating, a condition in which religion of a sort which had grown together with the civilization itself, as an integral part of it, gradually spread to fill that civilization to the point of saturation.

Such a condition would scarcely be possible where a particular religion had not come so to dominate the imagination and fancy of men and women as to color and influence even such actions as had no direct relation to the clearly religious element of their aims and activities. This saturation was preparing in the monastic communities during even the darkest of the Dark Ages. By the eleventh century the rootage had been established in these monastic nurseries, and the process of Christianizing the folk mind had well begun. The bare acts and aims of ritual practice differ after all but little fundamentally in different religions. It is their mythologies which develop in forms appropriate to the popular mind any particular religion's typical disposition, and the specific color of its ethical aims. Theological speculation and controversy might entertain some few minds, in those last centuries while Christianity still dwelt among the remnants of expiring paganism; but when, in the large area of western Europe, Christianity began to set a plowshare of fresh inspiration in fields long uncultivated, the predominating verdure which bespoke the newly sprouting cultivation was that of the legends of the saints, and of the Virgin. Here, better than in any theological treatises, we may test the richness, variety, and predominating quality of medieval religion.

The earliest cult of the martyrs, in which class were comprised almost all the earliest saints, was largely pragmatic. People resorted to their tombs, or their relics, more usually in order to get something done for them—their diseases cured, their economic or other misfortunes arranged. Mythology was pagandom. Even the most legendary element of Christianity was in comparison soberly historical, and even as late as the thirteenth century myth laid a very light hand upon elements of Christian tradition which had early authoritative documents to support it.[1] That myth collected around Christianity from the beginning is of course undeniable, but the very process in which certain literature was chosen, other literature rejected, in making up the authoritative *canon,* or list of accepted Christian writings, which came to constitute the New Testament, shows what was, if we keep our historical perspective, a conspicuously sober attempt to reject the fanciful.[2] At the very moment when Christianity was growing up in its European environment, even the more intelligent pagans had ceased to think of their mythology as other than fanciful tales, in which moral or symbolical meanings might be enwrapped; and, as has already been said, Ambrose smoothed the way for Augustine's conversion by pointing out in his preaching, how mythology of the Old Testament need not be taken literally, but as edifying allegory.

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[1] In the *Golden Legend* of Voragine, for example, whatever tales have early documentary evidence are conspicuously sober in comparison to the rest.

It was indeed in the Byzantine Empire, where the pagan intellectual tradition lived on more connectedly, that the first vigorous reaction came against the growing superstitious cult of the saints. Here it was plainly the monastic communities which harbored and encouraged worshipful regard of images and sacred relics. Early in the eighth century (726) an edict of the Byzantine emperor ordered that the images of saints be so elevated above the heads of worshipers that they would not be *adored* in prayer and worship. Some twenty-five years later a council in the East solemnly condemned all images, and a little later, in a movement which soon involved a widespread attempt to do away with monasteries, upon varied social and economic grounds, images were destroyed in churches and monasteries throughout the East.

This controversy linked itself, on both sides, with philosophy and theology, lasted over a century, caused the destruction of manuscripts and pictures as well as statues, and caused even a revolution in Byzantine art. But at Rome, where during the late seventh century the Byzantine influence had been very strong,[3] the attitude remained firmly in their favor.

Aside from political considerations, which drew the popes to turn from Constantinople toward the support of the Carolingians, in Christianity, taken over by Germanic barbarians, or by Ligurian peasants to whom older religious speculation meant nothing, there

[2] As an example of this it is interesting to note that the one purely imaginative work of the New Testament, the Apocalypse ascribed to the apostle John, was the last of all to be admitted among the accepted books.

[3] During the period 685-715 there were seven popes who were Greeks or Orientals.

was no longer this check against fanciful mythologizing, or materializing worship of images, which moved forces against certain phases of the cult of saints in the East. Germanic peoples were conscious of no contrasted pagan and Christian elements in the culture they borrowed. Christianity came to them as an organic part of Roman civilization. Whatever prestige the higher civilization enjoyed in their eyes was for them an added reason for accepting the religion they connected with it, and no embarrassment impeded them from giving free rein to mythologizing fancy.

Monastic life, which in the East had proven the stronghold of image worship, encouraged every element of the supernatural and miraculous that had attached itself to developing Christianity. Here was a life shut in and protected largely for the purpose of keeping a lively hold upon *supernatural* experiences and values, of a sort easily shaken into meaningless inconsistent shreds in the less hospitable atmosphere of ordinary secular life. Hallucinations were not only easily bred of such life, but he who might boast such experiences attained an immediate halo of particular sanctity; became the pattern for every piously aspiring soul. It is therefore not surprising that, when Christianity began to make popular conquests, it had already generously acquired circumstantial and specific elements of the marvelous with which to astonish untutored minds untouched by intellectual sophistication.

But solitude and supernatural preoccupation were not the only originating source of miraculous tales of origin among the clergy; the pragmatic interests of preaching added their contribution. The saints had their commemorative festal days, of which the calendar became more and more full. For such feast days the usual sermon material was a recounting of events from the life of the saint in question, to which were easily and soon added miraculous happenings brought about by their posthumous influence, exerted through their relics, or as a result of prayerful devotion to their memory.

The preacher was, then as always, interested first of all in getting and holding the attention of his hearers. To do so a certain amount of artifice was allowable, even as to-day, though the conventions differed. Stephan Langton, a theologian and Biblical commentator as well as a prelate and for a time Archbishop of Canterbury, chose to begin one of his sermons with a little poem, altogether in the fashion of troubadour gallantry:

> Waked fair Alice with the morning,
> Dressed and preened with care,
> Went into an orchard grove,
> Plucked five blossoms there
> And of them a chaplet wove,
> Flower-decked for her adorning—
> God grant the chaplet's trap betray
> He who loves not me to-day.[4]

Preachers were naturally quick to borrow for their sermons written accounts of lives and miracles of saints, but their desire to elaborate these with elements they might look to as effective and quite their own contribution was also understandable. The less that was actually known to tradition about the life of any particular saint, the more free they were to add elements of interest or edification.

But most complicated of all was the anonymous influence of the popular imagination. Where, for example, there were two or more historical characters of similar name, the acts or events of the lives of both or all of them came to be ascribed to the single one whom legend made most prominent. From characters of the New Testament Mary of Magdala and Mary of Bethany became a single person.[5] Charles the Great borrowed events from the life of Charles the Hammer in the Chansons de Geste.[6] For centuries peasants in a certain part of Europe kept attributing to St. Louis (Louis IX) deeds of Louis VII, confusing the two merely because both had gone to the Crusades.[7]

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[4] Bele Aliz matin leva,
Sun cors vesti et para,
Enz un verger s'en entra,
Cink flurettes y truva,
Un chapalet fet en a
De rose fleuri,
Pur Deu trahez vus en la
Vus ki ne amez mie.

Quoted from De La Rue, *Histoire des Bardes, Jongleurs, Trouveres Normands et Anglo-Normands,* 6.

[5] So in Voragine's life of St. Mary Magdalene.

[6] Charlemagne also assimilated legendary material from the lives of Julius Cæsar and Alexander the Great.

The lives of the saints assimilated material from all sides, from late pagan mythology, from indigenous pre-Christian folk lore; motifs of miracle, persecution or benevolent act become classic in connection with one saint, and used again and again to elaborate the lives of others.

So conspicuous persons in Christian traditional history became typical heroes and heroines which, in the dissolving piety of the later Middle Ages, might be introduced even into frankly imaginative tales the sole purpose of which was apparently to be amusing. One exaggerated tale of this sort may serve as an example of a tendency already present in tales much more piously intended.

This story recounts how a gay troubadour had been, because of his frivolities, and particularly because of his passion for gambling, sent for punishment to hell. There he seems to have got upon very friendly terms with Satan, so that one day, when Satan had business elsewhere and no one to leave in charge of a number of damned souls, this troubadour offered to guard them in his absence. Soon after Satan's departure, leaving the tormented souls in the troubadour's care, St. Peter arrived upon the scene. Of course the saint and guardian of the Gate of Heaven well knew the troubadour's weakness, and after some preliminary conversation he took out some dice, rattled a bag of gold pieces, and suggested a little game. The troubadour, tempted, had nevertheless nothing to wager, and Peter suggested that the damned souls might be set as stake against his gold. At first the troubadour, feeling his responsibility, refused, but in the end was unable to resist the temptation. In the end Peter won from him all the souls left in the troubadour's care. The *dénouement* of the tale is that Satan, on his return, was so angry to have been thus tricked that he threw the troubadour out of hell, and vowed he would never let another minstrel in.[8]

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[7] Delahaye, *Les Légendes Hagiographiques* (Bollandists), 19.

[8] Meray, *La Vie au Temps des Cours d'Amour,* 63, recounts this tale, "De Saint Pierre et du Jongleur."

But even such a tale as this is not without its significance in portraying an important element of the religious attitude of the Middle Ages. There was a time, to be sure, when in the twelfth century, the tide running strongly toward monastic retreat, and the strenuous influence of St. Bernard upon European morals being great, Christ came often to be portrayed in conspicuous places, such as above the central porches of abbeys and cathedrals, as the final Judge, weighing souls, and separating the blessed and damned.[9] But, for the popular imagination, the drama of salvation was more likely to be conceived as a game between God and Satan, in which the latter strove to entrap, the former to save men from satanic wiles by the intervention of saints. People might take even a morbid pleasure in piling full the measure of sin and penance to emphasize the plenitude of God's pardoning grace.

There is a strange twelfth-century legend of Gregory the Great illustrating this, of no apparent source other than gleanings from remembered pagan mythology, grown around his life for the purpose of portraying one of the outstanding saints of medieval legend as the outcome of incestuous union, and then later unknowingly guilty himself of incest by marrying, like Œdipus of old, his own mother. Having discovered his crime Gregory is, here like Prometheus, chained in expiation for seventeen years to a solitary rock in the midst of the sea, to be released from his penitence, absolved, and immediately raised to the papal chair.[10]

Legends might, however, arise from the most fortuitous circumstances. A certain Eusebia, an abbess, happened to have been buried in a sarcophagus that had formerly served to bury some pagan man.[11] An effigy of this man, *bearded,* appeared carven upon the sarcophagus, and the nose had in the wear and tear of time been broken from the effigy. In spite of the beard, and with no evidence other than the broken nose, a legend arose to the effect that, to escape the brutality of Saracen invaders, this Eusebia *and her forty companion nuns,* had all cut off their noses.[12]

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[9] See Male, *L'Art du XII^e Siècle en France,* 406ff.

[10] *Vie du Pape Gregoire du Grand* (published for the first time from a mss. by Victor Luzarche, 1858).

[11] This practice was not at all uncommon, as testified to by more than one sarcophagus at Arles and elsewhere.

The miraculous was by no means the only element of these lives of the saints to entertain the imagination of the Middle Ages. The itch for chills and thrills along the spinal column was not forgotten. Persecution and torture was elaborated with purely imaginary details of every conceivable brutality, and the picturesqueness of the proceedings was enhanced by the presence of such imposing *villains* of the plot as Nero, Diocletian or Decius. No less a person than the Roman Emperor himself saw to it that St. Lawrence was well roasted on his legendary grill.[13] Sometimes the saints, like benevolent fairy godfathers, might be portrayed as intervening, just at the critical moment, to bring about some happy ending to a pathetic tale. So St. Nicholas, the popular idol of the East, somewhat as was St. Martin of the West, drops a purse of gold pieces over the window sill of a dwelling where a poor but honest couple are on the point of selling their three daughters into prostitution, because they have no money to provide them with dowries, and thus marry them to desirable husbands.[14] Another saint might be portrayed as saving a child, about to expire from having failed in an attempt to swallow a fish bone.[15]

It might almost be said that there was no sorrow, no misfortune, no calamity from which one might suffer, that some saint, somewhere, at some time did not save from. We can perhaps reconstruct this attitude by setting a scene in our own time, and imagining that when the poor, ill-treated, but honest and virtuous stenographer marries her multimillionaire employer, it is the intervention of some passing saint that brings about the match.

It was also these saints who performed the deeds of heroism which made the wide-mouthed listeners for some moments themselves heroines and heroes vicariously. Not every maiden, who at some time in her virginal experience had imagined herself a nun and the Bride of Christ, was quite steadfast in her intention to pray all the night preceding her enforced marriage while a long beard sprouted on her lovely face, causing her to be repudiated the next morning by her fiancé and spared contamination. Many, however, might get the thrill of imagining themselves in the heroic rôle of the saint who had done so.

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[12] Delahaye, *Les Légendes Hagiographiques,* 44-45.

[13] See Voragine's story of St. Lawrence.

[14] This incident is pictured with naïve charm in one of the large windows of the choir, in the Cathedral of Tours.

[15] St. Blaise.

Story, history: the two words—in German, for example, still but one—tell how little differentiated them once. Our criterion of historical fact is not at all to be properly applied. Aristotle, keen psychologist, states in his *Poetics,* that the impossible is to be preferred to the improbable in a plot. The tales won conviction, not because of logical or factual consistency, but for the far deeper reason that they followed the very road of the listeners will-to-believe. Even those who might doubt some elements of the tales did not blush to recount these doubted elements along with the others, since they could hardly harm, and one might always hope that they would edify. Voragine might interpolate the critical comment, "All the same it hardly seems in every point probable either that St. Paul should have claimed to have been able to work at every sort of craft, or that the death sentence of that young man should have endured fourteen years" (this having been the number of years the young man had been dead when Peter is said to have raised him); but he inserts the tale nevertheless.[16]

Of course the saints were not merely heroes and heroines of tales that happened once-upon-a-time. They worked miracles in behalf of wishful people, had not only done so while alive but continued to do so centuries after their death. They saved those in peril on the sea, preserved one's purse from bandits on a lonely road. Particularly they healed the sick, even became specialists in certain diseases, which specialties they might attain in strange ways. In parts of Germany St. Augustine came to be a curer of sore eyes, for no apparent reason other than the fact that the first part of his name was *Auge,* the German word for eye; while in other parts of Germany the same Augustine was supposed to cure a cough, because the last part of his name resembled *husten,* the German verb for cough.[17]

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[16] Peter's comment, when Paul tells him how he has assured a skeptical pagan that Peter will raise his son after this long period has its interest: "It is prodigious, Paul, the thing you have promised, but with the power of God it will be easy enough," *Legend of the Throne of Saint Peter the Apostle.*

But another important rôle of the saints was to act as mediators between man and Christ. Very much earlier we have seen Christians looking to Jesus as mediator between mankind and the Father, but Christian art, of the romanesque period, when it did not portray Christ as Judge, chose oftenest to portray him in glory, surrounded by the "Four Beasts" of apocalyptic vision, the twelve apostles, and the four-and-twenty *elders.*[18] The glory of this Christ, represented in art by an aureole of elliptical form with pointed ends, was now so dazzling that human contemplation was blinded by it, and, says Voragine giving a reason for praying to the saints, "Since we are unable to contemplate the sovereign light itself, we pray that we may be enabled to look upon it in the saints." [19]

But the most gracious and potent advocate of mankind, ready to temper, sometimes to beguile stern justice in the person of the Son, was his virgin mother. The Blessed Virgin came to overtower all others as intermediary in the interest of erring human beings, her cult accumulating so many elements of the naïve and picturesque as to merit particular attention.

It would be impossible here to attempt to trace in any historical order the growth of the Cult of the Virgin. Industrious editors of the *Migne* collection have accumulated an encyclopædia of thirteen very ponderous volumes of material concerning the cult. We have already touched some landmarks of its history: the infancy material of two Gospels; the special regard for virginity in general which grew along with the influence of Gnosticism and Neoplatonic philosophy, to spread with the earliest broad ascetic movement in the Church; the controversy which the Council of Chalcedon aimed to still by declaring Mary to be the *Mother of*

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[17] Delahaye, *Les Légendes Hagiographiques,* 46.
[18] *Revelations,* chap. iv particularly.
[19] *The Golden Legend,* sec. on "The Greater and the Lesser Litany."

*God,* and not merely of Christ's humanity; the Christians of the seventh century, marching in Rome to the Church of the Virgin Mary, to seek her assistance against the plague. All these fragmentary chips of history set themselves not only in their chronical order, but represent as well steps in the development of the cult. When, about the year 1000, we note from the history of one *Leo the Deacon* that soldiers of the Byzantine Empire paid her special worship[20] we find another element—chivalric devotion—making of her a feminine ideal, the knight's *lady* of troubadour poets with which is mingled something of the Beatrice of less philosophizing and contemplative Dantes. Rough soldiers fought under her banner, for her honor and with her aid, and sought benediction in churches dedicated to her.

In the monasteries grew—began to flourish in the eleventh century—devotion of still another type. Here the thwarted instincts of celibate solitaries might more or less successfully be sublimated, wrapping her form in dreams of etherial eroticism. We have already quoted a love poem of the monk Peter Damiani, in which the Virgin is portrayed, with liveliness and beauty, as a maiden startled as her divine lover knocks upon the door. Many hymns and litanies were indited in her honor, by this same author above all. But stranger than any of these is the story found in a sermon long attributed to this same Peter Damiani, in which the foreshadowing of the birth of Jesus is made a love idyll, in which the second character is God the Father.[21]

> At length Mary is born, and come to adolescence, endowed with such beauty of form that God himself took note of it, and the divine eyes turned toward it, as bears witness one not the least learned in the secrets of God: "Listen daughter, incline your ears, forget your people even, and your father's house. Lo, the king has desired your beauty, since he is the Lord your God." . . . He sees, and burns ardently for it, a lover; and sings in praise of it a whole epithalamium (The "Song of Songs"),

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[20] See, for example, chap. ix, 158. "Sed divinae mataris imaginem, quam ex Moesia attulerit, in aureo sedili currus collocavit, substratis pururiis Moesorum tunicis, et coronis." In connection with the emperor's triumphal return from a campaign in Russia. Migne, LXVI, 418.

[21] Some modern critics ascribe this and other sermons appearing in the works of Peter Damiani to a somewhat later preacher of the same monastic order.

> in which is set forth their open espousal, breathing sincerest love, nor is he able longer to hide what is there manifested. Then straightway a meeting is called by him in heaven and, as the prophet witnesses, God announces his plan, giving oath to the angels for their restoration, for the salvation of mankind, the reformation of things from their very foundations, and for that stupendous plan of salvation, marvelous beyond rejoicing. Straightway also, from the hidden treasury (of his heart) the name of Mary is disclosed; the secret that through her, and in her, for her sake and with her, this which was about to happen was ordained. . . .[22]

Such a tale, however, represents but one of many ways in which the monastic imagination busied itself with her. It is hardly to be wondered that men who made what was undoubtedly often an heroic attempt to free their lives from less etherial feminine charms should have graced her with every feminine beauty and spiritual perfection, concentrating upon her all the impulse and idealism that sought completion through the other sex. The Middle Ages had a more objective and natural attitude toward the physical aspects of sex than we, even though they had not involved it so complexly with human psychology as modern thought. The fact that in the struggle for solution this instinct was not very kindly dealt with obscures the fact that it was nevertheless in practice handled with considerable mercy, and so even in ethical theory. Monks, even the most observant, were not prudes, nor had they our temptation to sentimentalize brute and naked facts. Their attempt, with the aid of the Virgin Cult, to abstract ideal elements of the complex was perhaps seldom more than approximately successful, but it is a mistake to align it universally with clinical documents of neuropthology. The cult of the Virgin had a difficult, but an important rôle to play in monastic life. The loveliest feminine qualities, idealized by men, were in this way not banished from the monasteries. The austere disciplinarian, Bernard of Clairvaux, paid always very special service to the Virgin, as was she indeed a particular object of devotion in all the bare abbeys of the twelfth-century Cistercians. Bernard, the uncompromising zealot with a passion to dominate is by no means always a winning figure, but one may nevertheless discover in him gentleness, tenderness, delicate courtesy that would be more difficult to account for, had it not been for the liveliness of this ideal.

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[22] Sermon XI, "De Annunciatione Beatissimae Virginis Mariae," Peter Damiani, *Opera,* ed. Caietan.

But it was not in the monasteries only that the Virgin came to play a rôle of picturesque importance. All the courtly and chivalric ideals with which we soon shall be occupied came to mold features of her varying physiognomy. Smart courtly clerks, gay troubadours and gallant knights might also pay their courteous due to her as the ideal of their devotion to femininity. Under this influence she came to be portrayed as coquette, and imperious as any belle, confident of universal masculine homage. As such she was ready to pardon with gracious completeness, or punish petulantly some slight lapse from constant service. Her august Son, melting immediately before her appealing feminine eyes, was to be counted on to pardon anything, could she but be gained as intercessor. This phase of her ideal character, so charmingly portrayed by Henry Adams, even though one might not perhaps choose Chartres Cathedral as background and expression of it so much as others, may be more lightly touched on here.[23] "The Tumbler of Our Lady"; the tale of the clerk Theophilus, who, having sold his soul to the Devil, regained pardon and his signed contract with the Virgin's assistance; the tale of the nun whose place in the choir the Blessed Virgin took when she had run away with her lover—such legends are well known.

Underneath all such tales, so disturbing to every abstract rule of ethical justice, was the deep desire for pardon and forgiveness of people struggling under an ideal that fought against deep instincts and constant temptations of a life where contrasts of ideal and reality were sharper than we can easily imagine. Filth of every sort was scarcely hidden, and yet was kept continually before their consciousnesses. The Church, though unbending in matters of doctrine, was generally tolerant and forgiving of human frailty connected with the natural appetites. It saw, and there it saw clearly, that there were slants of mental habit and attitude, *spiritual sins* they called them, which warped human nature to such disfigurement that bodily sins must reach almost the point of bestiality before they made such hideous human beings. The Church held tenaciously its own. Not a stone of its structure of power or wealth it was able to defend might be rashly touched without retribution. This aside the Church was largely an instrument of forgiveness, often quite too complacent. Of this pardoning power the Virgin came to be for a time the chief dispenser.

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[23] Henry Adams, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres,* chaps. x-xiii particularly.

Perhaps this fact never comes out in literature with more pathetic expression than in that prayer to the Virgin which the scapegrace genius François Villon wrote for his mother, probably the one human woman with whom he had always found solace and forgiveness. When this poem was written the Middle Ages were rapidly sliding downhill in decadence of many kinds, but this poem would hardly be out of place in any of a few preceding centuries.

Since the poem can scarcely be translated without doing an injustice, a single stanza may serve to remind us of the temper of its feeling:

> I'm but a woman, poor and growing old,
> To read things written I have never learned,
> Yet, in the church where my brown beads are told,
> Heaven painted on the plaster I've discerned,
> With Hell the other side, where damned are burned.
> One frighted me, the other gave me cheer,
> Which joy hath made me, Goddess very dear
> To whom all sinners everywhere should fly,
> Full of my faith, and confident in fear;
> In which faith do I live, and would I die.

## XXX

It would be a mistake, of course, to assume that the Virgin and the Saints preoccupied the entire imagination of everybody. There was one class particularly who were coming to lead more and more a life peculiarly their own. This was the class of nobles, from least to greatest, with the women of their households or their courts, and their retainers.

The conduct of war had undergone alterations. All through the eighth century infantry had been the backbone of Frankish military strength, but two circumstances combined to change this. For one thing, as the bulk of the Franks settled down to be agriculturists, it became more and more difficult to raise armies of peasants to fight long campaigns, particularly if they were to take them far from their homes and fields.[1] For the other factor, they had learned, from the Arabs and Huns largely, the greater efficiency of mounted warriors, and cavalry came more and more to be counted on as the primary element of military strength. This meant that the most proficient soldiers must be persons possessed of enough property to support a horse, and at least a few retainers. Here was an added factor to make of the Frankish warriors landed proprietors, and to make of landed proprietors in general professional soldiers. Agriculture was becoming relatively more settled and stable. The peasant might still be called upon to devote a part of his working year to brief periods of warlike adventure; but a soldier class began to evolve, quite unlike the armies of to-day, because it was composed not of large masses of troops but of little bands, which might number as few as half a dozen and scarcely ever except on rare occasions mounted to more than a few hundred, gathered for important campaigns into larger agglomerations, in which each smallest band owed allegiance only to its own petty chieftain and was bound to the larger army only by the allegiance of its chief to some overlord.

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[1] Inability to raise armies for concerted efforts against invading Norsemen was conspicuous in the ninth century.

The life of these professional soldiers, noble and retainer alike, tended to separate itself from the agricultural routine of the peasantry, forming a castle life of more leisure and less direct connection with the tillage of the fields than formerly, confining the predominant preoccupation with the business of war to a smaller class but elaborating its attitudes and machinery within that class.

In periods of peace the outdoor leisure of this class was entirely given over either to military training or the pleasures of the chase. The latter was not an avocation only, but to a large extent necessary to keep wild animals from increasing too rapidly. Packs of wolves lurked even on the outskirts of considerable towns, and might enter dark alleyways at night to snatch a stray animal or even a child. Larger game was disappearing, and seldom might the huntsman find more dangerous prey than a wild boar. A wildcat might make a formidable adversary to be sure, and exaggerating imaginations in romance made panthers and leopards of them. The wild buffalo had so early become a rarity that Gregory of Tours tells a story of how some Burgundian king discovered that one of the last few remaining early in the seventh century had been killed by a band of peasants from one of his villages, and how he was very angry because he had not been notified, so that he could have taken part in the hunt.[2] Here may be seen a beginning of the interest that denied to the European peasant, does even still in places, the right even to kill the fox who robs his hen roost.

Through the separation of this special class, leisured in the sense that its existence had little direct relation to the economic basis of its life, traditions of an older seminomad and largely predatory existence were kept alive, to be gradually civilized and elaborated by the refining of age-old ideals of courage and chivalry, until war became a *gentleman's* sport, with its courteous protocol, exacting conventions of behavior, picturesque paraphernalia; all of which code anger, lust or avarice might often overrule, but to which homage was nevertheless paid even to the point where obvious military advantages were foregone for the keeping of the rules of the game.

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[2] Meray, *La Vie au Temps des Cours d'Amour, etc.*, 20.

This situation, thus so briefly described, with its ever-increasing elaboration of ideal and ceremony—later to become ridiculous at the court of John the Good, a rich baron of the fifteenth century and Duke of Burgundy, and satirically portrayed as a sort of pathetic insanity in the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes—is the institution of Chivalry.

Had the Church stood aside and let this institution develop entirely apart from it a large measure of influence would have slipped from its hand. The religious tradition of Christianity, definite acts and words of Jesus, the non-resistant tradition of the early community in the Roman Empire, definite passages in the *Fathers* of ecclesiastical authority counseling Christians to avoid so far as possible service in the armies of Rome, all set the religion in theory against an institution built entirely about practices of war and bloodshed. None the less, and conspicuously from the time when converted Frankish monarchs began to take Christianity with them everywhere their conquests reached, the fortunes of the Church had been linked hardly less closely with war than with peace. Christianity, without being too heroic for practical achievement, could hardly set definitely its face against obvious advantages it was gaining as a result of the activities of its ambitious warlike converts. Easiest was an accommodation which gave it a part in shaping the chivalric code which might mitigate the treachery, injustice, and cruelty of war as a step, modest enough, along the way of peace, while at the same time retaining the hope of armed assistance when in need of it, and its own share in military spoils. Its missionaries followed in the wake of Charlemagne's military conquests, in which conversion was arranged sometimes by persuasion, sometimes by diplomatical protocol, only as a last resort by force. But when later the converted Saxons set about to Christianize and subjugate the Slavs it was a very colorful picture. Among the Wends, we read, "the bishops' seats were simply offices of exploitation,"[3] and save for these episcopal centers there were no actual churches. One chronicler writes:

> I have heard that the honest king of the Danes said that the Slav peoples would long since have been converted to Christianity if it had not been for the avarice of the Saxons.[4]

Otto of Bamberg's peaceful evangelization of Pomerania at the beginning of the twelfth century made of this country the only Slavonic land dominated during the Middle Ages by the Roman Church where the transition from the older religion to Christianity was gained by other means than armed force.[5]

Christianity not only accepted war for the very solid advantages it brought the Church, but very soon, laying its hand upon the customs which surrounded the life of the professional soldier, made of him in a sense a consecrated servant of its own.

No one ventured to assume the arms of a soldier among the Germanic tribes, Tacitus tells us, until his fittingness to do so had been approved by clan authority, when, in a public assembly, one of the chiefs, his father, or some relation, invested him with his shield and javelin.[6] Among the tribes of Tacitus' time, to grow up and to become a bearer of weapons were sufficiently synonymous that such a ceremony was but a particular form of those almost universally prevalent rites which celebrate among primitive peoples the moment when the youth is admitted and consecrated as an adult male member of the community. There is good reason to believe that this custom never entirely died out among the Germanic peoples until, war having become in a measure the business of a class, the ceremony was confined to those who fought as cavalry, and thus the one so ceremonially invested was the knight (the *chevalier* in French, because he rode a *cheval*). The usage came in time to be even more restricted, since everyone who fought on horseback was not necessarily a knight, but might be one who still aspired, as an esquire, to the dignity of knighthood later on.

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[3] Thompson, *Feudal Germany,* 403.

[4] Quoted from Adam of Bremen, III, 22 by Thompson, 405.

[5] *Ibid.,* 430.

[6] Tacitus, *Germania,* xiii.

As early as the time of Charlemagne the aspiring warrior was no longer invested with shield and javelin, but with a sword.[7] Upon this ceremony of investiture the Church was very early, at the dawn of the Middle Ages, to set its hand and seal of consecration. About the year 1000 there was a ceremonial of the Roman Church of three steps; the blessing of the knight's pennon, the consecration of the sword he was to assume, a final sanctification of the completed ceremony.[8] This ceremony was in some places at least but a forehanded intention, since nearly a century later the *Chanson de Roland* does not yet show the cavalier invested with this religious character,[9] and the Normans particularly, when they had been some two centuries Christians, still considered the knight whose arms had been bound on with religious ceremony as poltroon and degenerate.[10]

In the end, however, the Church was to succeed, the steps of its success being apparently obscure, and lying too far afield for us to follow them, until in the fullness of the Middle Ages, the investiture of the knight might be referred to as an *eighth sacrament.*

But the Church not only laid an influencing hand upon the outdoor activity of the professional soldier. It also occupied itself to help mold the warlike tales which were long substantially the sole imaginative diversion of their indoor life. The origin of the custom of reciting such tales where men gathered to feast or otherwise while away their peaceful or inactive moments was far older than the earliest beginnings of Christianity's history. The heroes whose deeds were recounted were no milksops, if one may judge from stories which reached literary form even long after western Europe had become Christian. On Good Friday they might hesitate to eat meat, but not to burn an entire village to the ground, and with it all the inhabitants of a convent of nuns;[11] and their leader might even give the order to his henchmen,

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[7] So Charlemagne invests his son in 791, Gautier, *La Chevalerie,* 23.

[8] Luchaire in *Histoire de France* (ed. Lavisse), II, ii, 141.

[9] Compare Luchaire, same passage, and Gautier, 28.

[10] Delaunay, *Origine de la Tapisserie de Bayeux,* 45, 51.

[11] Paris, *La Littérature Française au Moyen Age,* Introd. sec. 10.

"Plant my tent in the middle of the Church, make up my bed in front of the altar, and perch my falcons on the golden crucifix." [12]

The influence of Christianity without doubt played a part in bringing about gradually a more humanitarian feeling, but was unquestionably more successful in coming to dominate its world intellectually than morally.[13] Nor was it alone as an influence making for gentleness and courtesy, and for chivalrous care for the weak. While the literary influence of the Church continued to express itself in Latin a new literature began to assume form and enunciate ideals of social conduct in the spoken language of the people: the literature of the troubadour poets, elaborating with sentiment and courtly manners the relationship between men and women within the higher circles of society, and touching in an iyllic way the love motif among simpler surroundings. The peasant maid in love might be made to dream of a lover whose parentage she placed in Fairyland, imagining him to say:

The Nightingale, whose joyous trill
Wakes the woods when all is still;
  Him I claim as father.
Would you know my mother? She
Is the Siren singing by the sea,
  Or some lone upland river.[14]

The influence of the castle boudoir upon life contributed its part in refining the ideal of knighthood, which in turn might somewhat humanize warlike passions; but it is hardly safe to insist too far. Ladies who listened with pleasure to delicately phrased homage also loved to lean over the balustrades at tournaments, and were only pleasantly shocked by the sight of blood, and courtly troubadours were by no means soft. One of them, in a poem, prescribes as remedy, in case a love proposal is too discourteously received, "a fist in the middle of her nostrils." [15]

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[12] From the chanson de geste of *Raoul de Cambrai,* the first literary form of which may date from the tenth century.

[13] *La christianisme . . . donne au moyen age toute sa physionomie intellectuelle et une partie de sa physionomie morale,* Paris, *La Literature Française au Moyen Age,* 15.

[14] Li rosignox est mon pere,
Qui chante sor la ramee
El plus haut boscage.
La seraine ele est ma mere,
Qui chante en la mer salee
El plus haut rivage.
Aubry, *Trouvères et Troubadours,* 74.

In short, it is very difficult in the first place to ascribe to Christianity and to the tradition of courtly courtesy of more worldly inspiration their respective parts in delineating the finished picture of the ideal knight, and again difficult to appraise the relativity of that ideal to actual facts. One thing Christianity did however succeed in doing. That was to turn, at the very end of the eleventh century, the warlike energies which were fast making more and more of a nuisance of themselves in Europe against a foreign and non-Christian foe, in that remarkable movement of the Middle Ages, the Crusades.

However much the Church, in one or another of its institutions, might profit by warlike adventure which extended the boundaries of Christendom, it had in general little to gain from internecine struggles of the barons among themselves; less destructive of life than we may imagine, since a castle might be successfully defended by a score of men, and but few nobles could muster more than a few hundred retainers, but a constant menace to peasant and monastic property. As early as the later tenth century a council had pronounced an anathema against the pillage of churches and the poor.[16] Proposals to insure peace had broad popular appeal, and from 1034 synods and councils for some time legislated to discourage at least private war. First they did so by instituting *leagues of peace,* in which nobles, commoners, and clerics were in different places put under oath to preserve peace among themselves; all amidst an enthusiasm in which "the bishops raised their crosses toward the sky, and all the people at the same time their hands, crying three times, as with a single voice: Peace! in token of the *eternal* alliance which had just been concluded.[17]

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[15] E si vos fan respos pejors,
Das lor del punh per mei las nars;
E si son bravas, sias braus,
Ab gran mal n'auretz gran repaus.
Anglade, *Anthologie des Troubadours,* 100.

[16] Fliche, *Le Regne de Philippe Ier, Roi de France,* 500.

[17] From the chronicler Raoul Glaber, quoted by Hefele, *History of the Councils,* Vol. VI, sec. 536.

A sole skeptical bishop doubted that these good intentions could be put permanently in practice, as indeed soon apparently the facts proved, since only a few years later the more modest attempt was being made to bind people to refrain from war on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and during certain periods of the Church calendar, the earlier leagues giving place to what was called the *truce of God.*

> We bless and declare to be absolved from their sins all those who love this peace and this truce of God; on the contrary those who oppose it shall be excommunicated, cursed and anathematized by us, and excluded from the holy Church.[18]

In order, however, that such attempts should become universal, instead of being confined to particular regions, it would have been necessary to enlist the active interest of the popes who, during this century were too much occupied by their own struggle with the emperor and the King of France to increase their authority by wresting from the secular monarchs the right to invest the prelates of their realms with their lands and secular dignities.

Meanwhile another popular religious habit was to come to be of influence indirectly bringing about these Crusades; namely, religious pilgrimages.

With what has already been said about the preoccupation of the popular imagination with marvelous tales of holy persons, it will not be difficult to understand why many should have wished to visit places where marvelous things had occurred. The desire of many to visit the battlefields of the late war is no far-fetched analogy, added to which were other more pragmatic motives and incitements. Just as at Lourdes to-day, miracles were likely to happen; and if one had no particular physical ill which he might hope to lose at some holy shrine everyone had sins, and pilgrimages were potent to remove the pains of prospective later punishment for them.

The Holy Land of Palestine was still the most wished-for goal of pilgrimage, and even the Arab conquest had not closed the land to Christians. Even doughty barons, vexed to find so little big game nearer home, might go so far on hunting expeditions.[19] More central for western Europe was the tomb of the good St. Martin at Tours. There were many others worth the visiting, and itineraries were prepared, setting forth routes and stopping places, since pilgrimages were profitable to monastic communities or churches worth the visiting, and to local merchants and innkeepers as well. The strenuous efforts and tremendous influence of the order of Cluny turned many pilgrims toward the reputed tomb of the apostle James at Compostello, in northern Spain, just across the western Pyrenees from France. Pilgrims crossing the mountains were likely to traverse a pass where, in 788, the rearguard of Charlemagne's army, returning from a campaign against the Saracens of very meager success, was massacred by a band of Basque mountaineers, who had resented this intrusion among their mountains, and doubtless also were tempted by the thought of booty. Pilgrimage gave new life to this incident, save that legend made Saracens of the enemy. Finally out of this legend came the most important of the chansons de geste: the *Chanson de Roland.*

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[18] Fliche, *Le Regne de Philippe Ier.*

Soon other shrines wished also to have their chansons de geste, in which it appears that monks and troubadours collaborated.[20] This appears to have been an indirect way by which the clerical class came to influence a sort of literature grown up entirely independent of them, and written not in Latin but the vernacular tongues. Heroic tales came to be written, or redacted, surrounding different local heroes, many of whom centered about half-mythical struggles between Christendom and Moslem unbelievers, Charlemagne in the background, the sacred imperial protector of the true faith. These epic tales attributed to him deeds and campaigns of his ancestor Charles the Hammer, and scattered Saracens in quite unexpected places, where Charlemagne had subjected nonbelieving foes in countries that Islam had never touched.

The original tendency of this literature was, as has been suggested, to interest and attract pilgrims to various shrines, but at the same time it quite naturally turned the popular mind toward the idea of contest between Christians and Saracens. Meanwhile calls for help began to come from the East. The Turks, first hired as mercenaries by Arabs becoming too civilized to wish longer to fight their own battles, and weakened by schism and internal dissension, began to overturn their masters. While the Arabs had been tolerant of Christians in Palestine and Syria, the Turks began persecutions, and the holy places became unsafe for Christian pilgrims. Meanwhile these same Turks menaced the power of the Byzantine Empire. Gregory VII was pope, with a complicated situation upon his hands. He dreamed of the possibility of extending his power over the Eastern Church, also had his own use for an army against the Normans in Sicily. He applied to the zeal of an enthusiastic baron who offered to raise what forces he could and set out to relieve Christians in the Holy Land, a well-cushioned soft pedal, decided finally to ask the emperor for an army to *relieve* the still quarreling and divided Christians of the Byzantine Empire, with incidental mention of the Holy Land itself. But, however tempting was the vision of Eastern and Western Christendom united under Rome, other things were more pressing.[21]

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[19] Joinville tells of Saint Louis' meeting with a Scandinavian knight who had come to hunt lions in the native fashion in Syria.

[20] This is one important thesis of Bedier's four volumes, *Les Légendes Épiques.*

Such flirtings with the general subject of the Saracens and the East gradually turned the minds of people in that direction, and some twenty years later the idea of a crusade appears to have been born in the mind of another pope, Urban II.

This Urban II was not only the first pope to gather together popular threads of enthusiasm as the first definite project of a crusade of Christendom against the Moslem, but also the first pope to interest himself in the popular movements for peace in western Europe. When, six years after his election as pope he finally sat for the first time upon the papal chair in the Lateran Palace, being a Frenchman he lost little time in crossing into France to strengthen French support at the moment when his opponents seemed weaker than ever before during his papacy. And when the council was called by him at Clermont, in 1095, attention was divided between attempts to establish universally the *truce of God* in Europe, and that crusade which might hope to turn elsewhere warlike enthusiasms.

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[21] The appeal of Sylvester II for a crusade is now generally recognized to have been a later forgery.

It seems clear that the idea of the Crusade was one for which the ground had already been prepared; not less so that, in the mind of Urban, peace in Europe and war against the Saracen were closely connected. An eloquent orator, when he addressed the council he had called at Clermont, he exhorted those present in words that link the two:

> Arise, turn your weapons, that reek with the slaughter of your brothers, against the enemies of the Christian faith. Oppressors of orphans and widows, assassins, violators of churches, you who prey upon the property of others, who receive your wages from the shedding of Christian blood, clad like vultures in the stench of fields of slaughter: hasten, that your souls may live, to set out under your captain Christ, to Jerusalem's defense. Buy yourself free, you who are guilty of such crimes as separate you from the Kingdom of God, for such is the will of God.[22]

His discourse, says the anonymous contemporary chronicler of the First Crusade, spread little by little through all the provinces of Gaul, and men began to sew the cross upon their right shoulder.[23]

We cannot here follow the events of this first or of subsequent crusades. More and more, as decades, centuries passed, crusading became the business of adventurous professional soldiers, whose absence in the East undoubtedly left freer room for the growth of civilization factors their quarreling had dwarfed, and thus caused momentous changes in Europe. But this First Crusade was, to an astonishing extent, a popular movement in which all classes shared. Nothing more clearly evidences this fact than the fate of its great popular preacher, Peter the Hermit. Before anything even attempting military organization had been accomplished an unordered, and soon disorderly horde, men, women, children even, and many of the riffraff and vagabondage of society, left overland, by way of the Danube Valley, in five divisions. Of these five divisions three never even reached Constantinople. One engaged in a preliminary persecution of Jews in the Rhine Valley, and had been scattered before able to leave Hungary. Two others were cut to pieces in Hungary because of the nuisance they made of themselves by excesses of many kinds. The two remaining had been cut to pieces, and lay for the most part bleached skeletons upon the fields and sands of Syria, before six months had passed subsequent to their arrival in the Byzantine capital.

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[22] Quoted from sermon of Urban II, by Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom,* IV, 271.

[23] *Histoire Anonyme de la Première Croisade* (ed. Brehier), par. 1.

A variety of motives combined to raise and set in route this motley host. Two years before there had been pestilence over much of Europe, the preceding year a famine in rich Lorraine. The economic situation of many was thus such as to make the chances of fortune tempting anywhere. But underneath all this was a fervor of religious excitement comparable to that of a camp meeting. This First Crusade was, more than any that followed, a pilgrimage under arms. All the motives which had united to make religious pilgrimages popular were present, the hope included, doubtless, that some miracle would make conquering warriors even of women and children upon the holy soil of Palestine. Added to this were the chances of booty, to be counted upon in any military adventure of the time, if it proved successful.

And, despite the failure of the popular crusade, and the fact that it was to the military host, which followed the horde of poor people almost a year later, that the capture of Jerusalem in this First Crusade was due, it was the popular leader whom legend handed down as the hero of the crusade. Peter the Hermit arrived, to be sure, in Constantinople, and survived to be present at some of the military exploits of this crusade, but in a rôle of no military importance.[24] Indeed the contemporary chronicler tells how, in a moment of particular difficulty, he with another leader slipped off secretly, and was forcibly brought back as a deserter.[25] Nevertheless, before the crusading ardor had burned itself away, legend recounted how this Peter the Hermit, while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, had been given commission by God Himself, in vision, to tell his good people in France to come to his assistance,[26] and that the pope in consequence made him his *bailiff* or lieutenant in the enterprise, and the guide of the crusaders.[27]

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[24] The legend of Peter the Hermit has been the subject of fairly recent critical study. The *Anonymous Chronicle of the First Crusade* in itself evidences his very secondary military significance.

[25] "Willelmus igitur Carpentarius et Petrus Hermita pro immensa infelicitae ac miseria ipsa latenter recesserunt. Quos Tancredus persequens apprehendit secumque reduxit cum dedecore," *Histoire Anonyme de la Première Croisade,* 15.

Jerusalem was captured, just at the end of the eleventh century (July, 1099), and three principalities were set up, to which was soon added the Kingdom of Jerusalem. To the feudal rivalries thus engendered the further complication of commercial competition among Italian cities, and the jealous suspicion of the Byzantine Empire contributed their difficulties; all of which soon turned crusading into a political scramble for geographical prizes in the East. The Second Crusade began under auspices in some ways more favorable than the preceding one. Bernard of Clairvaux consented, not without reluctance, to be its inspiring spirit; then threw himself enthusiastically into the movement. When his preaching caused such demand for crosses to sew upon the shoulders of aspiring crusaders as to exhaust the material on hand, he tore his cowl in shreds that crosses might be made of it, and wrote the pope that, in the villages, it would be difficult to find one man for seven women, so many had parted for the crusade. The pope too had tried to do his share in preparation, forbidding the knights to take their hunting dogs or falcons with them, but unfortunately not forbidding them to take their wives and mistresses. Preparations were more orderly, and the expedition approached more nearly a military campaign than the preceding. But the zeal of Bernard had introduced a new complication, by enlisting the Emperor, Conrad III. This grew in Germany, but the crusaders of northern Germany preferred to attack unbelievers nearer home, and turned their arms against the Slavic Wends, while the armies of the French king and of the German emperor could never get near together without quarreling. The Byzantine state was also more actively unfriendly than before. The Byzantine emperor having been disappointed before the crusade began, in a demand that all conquests made should become fiefs of the Byzantine Empire, when the Westerners came to traverse his territory they were treated more as enemies than helpers.

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[26] *Chanson d'Antioche*, 200ff.
[27] *Ibid.*, 264-266.

The Third Crusade had its own particular romantic hero, Richard of England (even more intimately of Poitou in France), and has become perhaps the crusade *par excellence* of romance. Already the crusades had slipped from the control of the popes. The two kings who were to be its leaders (Richard of England and Philip August of France) bound each other with oaths neither to attack nor injure each other, to divide loyally the spoils, and moreover that, whichever of them was first to reach Messina would there await the other before setting out for the Holy Land. First of all it had brought about a treaty of peace between Normandy and France, and the double joy over the establishment of peace in France and the hope of the crusade itself caused the chronicler to tell how "everyone took the cross, because none was able to keep himself from doing so, nor to refuse the great absolution" [28] which the pope had extended generally to all who went upon the crusade.

But underneath the auspices were not so favorable. Before they set out "the Devil had arranged so effectively to inject discord between the two kings that it could not be appeased before death had cured it, by the passing of one of them,"[29] and in England, another contemporary informs us, the initial crusading enthusiasm turned itself against the Jews:

> Now in the year of our Lord's incarnation 1189, Richard . . . was consecrated king of the English. . . . On the very day of his coronation, about that solemn hour, in which the Son was immolated by the Father, a sacrifice of the Jews to their father the devil was commenced in the city of London, and so long was the duration of this famous mystery, that the holocaust could scarcely be accomplished the ensuing day.[30]

Not, indeed, until the very beginning of the thirteenth century did the papacy get any solid advantage of the crusading Urban II

[28] *L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte,* 365 (Contemporary chronicle).

[29] *Ibid.,* 160-166.

[30] *Chronicle of Richard of Devizes.* The first paragraph of the chronicle proper, following an introductory prologue.

had started, and then in a strange, unexpected, and very temporary form. Innocent III, certainly one of the greatest popes, and as statesman perhaps greatest of all, made the crusade which he instigated the center of his many-sided papal policy. To control it was, among other things, a means of checkmating the influence and aims of the emperor. It began with crafty intrigue upon the part of the Venetians, who drove a hard bargain for the transportation of the army to Egypt, easily getting the better of knights who might be upon occasion highwaymen in the grand style, but were infants in the hands of bankers and business men. Unable to raise the money they had contracted to pay, the crusaders found themselves seizing, for Venice, a port on the Adriatic which Venetian merchants coveted; then in Constantinople, in the midst of a revolution in which they soon were taking part, even to the limit of seizing the government and seating a Norman, Baldwin of Flanders, as Emperor. Now at last the Eastern Church came under the sway of Rome, though the Venetians seized the first prize, by arranging that a Venetian should be Patriarch of Constantinople. Innocent's ideals, and his whole policy regarding this crusade, had been turned aside. He rebuked the leaders for having turned their arms against Christians, but not until he had made all the necessary arrangements for the governing of the Eastern part of Christendom.[31]

Despite the important rôle religion had played in motivating the crusades, among their various effects upon the succeeding history of Europe[32] the religious consequences were of almost the least importance and whatever religious consequences they had were generally far from salutary. From the religious standpoint the crusading impulse soon degenerated from enthusiastic impulse to more generally applicable idea. Concerted persecution of the Jews, who were to be sure coming to occupy a more and more anomalous position in a civilization in which, according to theory, none but a Christian was a member, was one of its effects. Soon also the term crusade might be conveniently used to denominate movements intended, not to conquer nonbelievers, but to dissipate or extirpate heresy.

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[31] This triumph was of short duration (1204-1261) since the Latin empire of Constantinople never covered nearly all the territory of the Byzantine Empire, and Constantinople soon fell before a Greek.

[32] Every subsequent change in European civilization has been laid, by some historian or other, to the count of the Crusades. This makes it all the more striking that the religious influence was as comparatively slight as it seems to have been.

Already, however, in the twelfth century the Crusades had begun to make provision in the East, and out of Europe, for ambitious younger sons of prominent baronial families, thus removing some of the frictions of feudal aspiration. In this negative way, among others more positive, they contributed to the social situation a somewhat more peaceful atmosphere. It is to the general characteristics of this twelfth century, particularly as affected by Christianity, to which we now pass.

## XXXI

THE twelfth century may well be called the most religious century of the Middle Ages. One might also add that it is, of all the medieval period, the century richest in color and contrast. It is the century of heroic gesture, often in awkward or even futile expression. The Crusades, in which a longing for peace at home found expression in foreign war, leading in turn to a new sort of bloodshed at home—crusades against heretics, and the cruel, skulking, often avaricious machinations of the Inquisition—well exemplify the manner in which its aspirations were often twisted and distorted. In this century even the Roman Church might, in a moment of heroic impulse, reach for a star at the risk of its earthly equilibrium; as when a pope, Pascal II, arrived at the point of signing with the Holy Roman Emperor, a convention in which, in return for the renunciation on the part of the emperor of all his rights to *invest* prelates with their temporal prerogatives, the bishops were to renounce their lands and properties, and content themselves to live upon the offerings of their flocks (1111).[1] This good intention came to nothing, of course, though it was the sole possible solution of the quarrel over investitures; but the gesture itself, despite its failure, was one which can hardly be imagined either as antedating or succeeding the passage of this century.

For papal policy, it was a century which began with Urban II, zealous Cluniac monk, and follower of the policies of Gregory VII; was continued with more or less successful compromises in the matter of investitures; and ended with Innocent III, jurist and theologian, educated, one might say, in and for the papal Curia, who, with a clear policy in which the secular princes had a recognized rôle to play, came nearer than any pope before or after to achieving, by diplomacy and statesmanship, the influence and power toward which the medieval papacy aspired.

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[1] This convention is known as the Concordat of Sutri. Henry V, the emperor, realizing well the difficulty of achieving any such renunciation, demanded that, to make it effective, it must gain the consent of the German bishops—which it never could attain and so came to nothing.

It was the century of Frederick Barbarossa, whose dreams for the Empire were not less grandiose than those of Gregory VII for the papacy; who fed upon absolutist theories of government, inspired by the revived study of Roman law, and dreamed of Charlemagne; who became after his death, somewhat as Charlemagne himself, a half-legendary figure.

It was the century of the troubadours in France, and if we extend but a few years into the next century, of the minnesingers of Germany. It was the century of the chanson de geste, and at its end the *Nibelungenlied* and Wolfram's *Parsifal* were written. And, when in the sphere where love and war mingle we pass from poetry to life, it is the century of Richard the Lion-hearted, of Abelard and Héloïse.

In monastic life it is marked by the rise of reforming orders, of which one, the Cistercians, might boast perhaps the one most potent individuality of the age, Bernard of Clairvaux.

It was the century when, feebly to be sure, the peasants began to lighten the feudal burden upon their backs; when too the cities —crushed before the Roman power had completely fallen, and crowded behind high walls until they were little more than fortified camps dominated by the castle of some lord or bishop—began to evolve a broader life, enriched by trade and artisanry, in which the city men (*bourgeois*) gained more and more influence in their local government. Also it was the century in which little barons began to be crushed by bigger ones; when the cleavage between baronial and imperial interests in Germany had become clearer, and the popular mass might on occasion play either way as interest dictated; when in France the office of king came to be something more substantial than a title of some sacrosanct efficacy.

In short, it was the century in which all the medieval forces were actively at work, none of them clearly defined or fixed. It was the Middle Ages *par excellence;* the Middle Ages which did not yet recognize itself as such, and was partly for this reason living and aspiring (for he who leaves out aspiration cannot hope to touch the secret of the Middle Ages) more freely and intensely, often more incongruously than ever afterwards.[2]

It is not in the intellectual realm that one must seek to understand the religious complexion of such a century. Its intellectual father was Anselm of Canterbury, steeped in the writings of Augustine,[3] who, in the opening paragraph of a proof of the existence of God to be based upon abstract and formal logical conceptions, cries, "Speak now, my whole heart!"[4] "He clung altogether to skyey theories," a medieval chronicling monk says of him,[5] and he himself:

> Whither was I striving? . . . to what did I aspire? . . . I wished to smile in the joy of my mind, and I am compelled to frown by the sorrow of my heart. . . . I long to understand in some degree thy truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe—that unless I believed, I should not understand.[6]

It is then, in emotion and aspiration, in florid abandon and in harsh intensity, aiming in one hurtling bound of imagination, or with tears of penitence as through the portals of a church, to pass from earth to heaven, that we must aim to understand the religious complexion of the twelfth century. Perhaps, in the limited compass permitted to us, its interpretation may best be sought in one most comprehensive, and in one intense and personal expression: in the Romanesque Art, which flowered and passed into the Gothic in this century, and in the career of one whose name has already more than once been mentioned—Bernard of Clairvaux.

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[2] Consciousness of what we call the *Middle Ages* as a definite period, with a complexion of its own, appears first vaguely in some Italian chroniclers of the thirteenth century. When this spirit began to wane, *Humanists* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries began to distinguish the characteristics of the era, Bühler, *Das deutsche Geistesleben im Mittelalter,* 13.

[3] "I have not been able to find . . . any statement which is inconsistent with the writings of the Catholic Fathers, or especially with those of St. Augustine," Anselm, *Monologium,* Preface.

[4] *Proslogium,* chap. i.

[5] *Orderic Vitalis* (died 1140).

[6] *Proslogium,* chap. i.

The destructive invasions of Saracens, Hungarians, and Normans, the periodic devastations of fire, that continued for centuries to destroy churches more or less completely,[7] finally the ever-increasing order, security, and well-being, during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, tempting people everywhere to replace older and simpler churches with more imposing edifices, all combined to leave in western Europe few churches antedating the eleventh century.[8]

By this time there had arisen, out of various and somewhat motley elements—Byzantine, Syrian and Palestinian, Moslem; left-overs from classical tradition, and from the classically inspired renascence of Charlemagne's time; pictorial inspiration from illuminated monkish manuscripts, where cloistered imaginations played with hardly less fanciful descriptions of strange animals, gleaned from old geographies and natural histories of the late classical age; contemporary recounted tales, first-hand observations which slipped without boundary line, like figures in the dusk, into the grotesque or fanciful—an art, of which many initial stages lie hidden in ruins pulverized centuries ago. Fortunately, by the eleventh century, the classic tradition, in which artists continued to be accomplished imitators long after any freshness of inspiration had departed,[9] had been buried among the débris of disorder which preceded and followed the reign of Charlemagne.

This art had risen for people who, if they were neither monks nor secular clerics, with few exceptions could not read at all, and who, if as clerics they were supposed to be able to read at least their service books, were often either too engaged with their own salvation, or too lazy, to read more than absolutely necessary. Churches needed portals, and they needed supporting pillars. If built of wood, they needed tapestries to cover the walls where the wind might blow through the cracks; and if the walls were

[7] As an example, fire devastated the Abbey of St. Martial, in Limoges in 954, 975, 1053, 1060, 1140, 1167. De Lasteyrie, *L'Architecture Romane,* 2 ed. 227.

[8] To this fact is largely responsible the exaggerated idea of nineteenth-century historians as to the importance of the Crusades in accounting for romanesque art.

[9] The Gallo-Roman Christian sarcophagi show how sculpture had become an imitative trade. Le Blant, *Les Sarcophages Chrêtien de la Gaule,* Introd. has some instructive remarks.

of stone, they needed painting to hide their bareness. Around these portals, or the capitals of these pillars, upon these walls, with a chisel or a brush one might write a language everyone might read. Moreover, to write this language one need not himself know how to read. So the churches became a sort of popular university, where everyone learned, and anyone might teach who had imagination, and possessed the artisanship of the mason, carpenter or painter, or even the feminine craft of needlework. There were models, to be sure, and there were traditional motifs; but few rules of the art save those handed down in the trade which was at their basis, or were discovered by some anonymous genius as he attacked some still untried problem.

In this situation, doubtless, lies the secret of the Romanesque pillar capitals, with subjects fanciful, historical, grotesque, or merely ornamentally decorative, forced into appropriate form with truly dazzling ingenuity.

Nothing in heaven, earth or hell, in history or fancy, was excluded by this art. The decapitation of a saint, the elect in Heaven, the Devil in chains, the Beatitudes, the alphabets, griffons or acanthus leaves,[10] obscenities, indelicate imaginings of a queen's handmaids; [11] all such were not only material for this art, but might also find some place about a church or monastery which they might decorate. But, while this art might be grotesque, even obscene, it was neither prurient nor frivolous. When it laughed it was likely to grin, but where it was grave, and this was always its deeper mood, it lived among sublime tragedy, relieved by what might be called an almost physically audible rustle of angels' wings. They were sober and somber imaginings, these dreams in stone of unnamed poets; they were not even afraid of being brutal. One capital shows Adam grasping Eve by a generous handful of her hair, as she kneels before him, waiting chastisement for having tempted him; but an angel is there, a beneficent but not at all etherial angel with a rather heavy chin, to temper his wrath.[12] But there might be loveliness too, of naïve and gracious expression, and delicate ornament which the more suave thirteenth century could not outdo.[13] There was tenderness, expressed with no reserves of conscious dignity; simple, almost caressing appreciation of homely elements of such scenes as the Nativity. Almost always there was movement; movement almost too vigorous, yet with such straightforward purpose, such evident desire to tell the story, and no studied attempt to portray in stilted violent rhythms the artist's accomplishment. Then too, with a charming and instinctive sense of pattern, that set the moving figures—all life and vigor contemplated closely, yet, in the fading of distant view, with the softening touch of time upon them—their activity suspended—in an ambience all of the imagination, which gives to its Last Judgments, its Christs in Glory, its Virgins Enthroned, beneath which worshipers crossed the threshold of their churches, a repose and dignity that arrest the drama as an eternal contemplative vision.

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[10] Taken at random from subjects of capital pillars in the cloister of Moissac in the Garonne Valley.

[11] As, for example, some curious figures in the border of the famous tapestry of Bayeux.

It is an art which conceals its intentions with no subtleties, hides but little its material, hardly even its effort; but all this lends it life, contrast, picturesqueness. It was an art of simple men, unsophisticated and of undivided conviction; and an art for simple men, and for simple women. In this measure it was a monastic art, that the larger proportion of the edifices it graced were monastic; its pretentious efforts more often abbeys than cathedrals. Also, because the minds, and often the hands as well, of many monks worked at building them. But this influence has been exaggerated. The conceiving minds and executing hands were predominantly of laymen.[14] Learned monks might dig up miniatures from older monkish manuscripts, to serve as iconographic guides, but the Romanesque product of this inspiration was no copy, but a fresh creation, which breathed a freer and a more robust life.[15] Even in the matter of iconography, the theological symbolism upon which the cleric would first of all lay a restraining hand, Romanesque art is not only "more human and living" than cloistered Byzantine art, but richer than the more logically ordered art which followed it.[16]

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[12] See Brehier, *L'Art Chrétien,* 212 (Plate 103).

[13] See panels of Annunciation and Visitation, from the church portal at Moissac, Male, *L'Art Religieux du XII$^e$ Siècle en France,* 64, fig. 53; or Rupin, *Moissac, L'Abbaye et les Cloitres de . . . ,* 336, plate V.

[14] Violet le Duc was largely responsible for a common misconception as to the monastic influence upon Romanesque art. De Lasteyrie, *L'Architecture Romane,* 237-238, presents a more moderate view, which may still exaggerate the rôle of the monks, as suggested by his own statement as to the rich variety exhibited by the architecture of Cluniac abbeys.

It was an art that built itself into the very structure of the churches, flowered from and clung with unbroken texture to it; just as its contemporaries could not conceive, save in diabolic terms, any human life separate from the Church.[17] It was an art that hewed its conceptions, to be sure, awkwardly often, out of very rough material, physical and human; bolstered the walls which carried its aspiring vaults with very cumbrous buttresses. It was, in short, the Middle Ages, at a herculean task; not knitting earth to heaven with etherial, immaterial, ordered subtleties, but with groans and tears of penitence, with pains of Purgatory, with naïve faith in pardoning grace.

The reforming activity inspired from Cluny, and the influence of this community which grew and flourished particularly after several popes, Gregory VII most conspicuously, found a compact body of monks under centralized control of value to their purposes, has already been touched upon. But Cluny's effectiveness was by no means all given to purifying the habits of monks, or to weakening the power of bishops. The order soon began to prosper materially, and was able even to bring prosperity to abbeys gathered beneath her power against their own will, forcing barons who had despoiled them in times of weakness to return properties they had taken.[18] Under the influence of this movement Benedictines whom Cluny had not gathered in also flourished, with more ordered life, and more generous treatment from kings and great barons who were gradually establishing more general political order, as essential to their more widespread power.[19]

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[15] For discussion of influence of Byzantine manuscripts upon Romanesque art, with plates to facilitate comparison, see Male, *L'Art Religieux du XIIᵉ Siècle en France,* 56ff.

[16] Pillion, *Les Sculpteurs français du XIIIᵉ Siècle,* 41-42.

[17] The pillar statues of the west portal at Chartres are hewn from the same block with the pillars. For comparison, note how even such a thinker as Dante could hail Virgil as "Virtue Supreme" (O virtu somma) while closing even Purgatory to him, because among those who "worshiped not God aright," *Inferno,* x, 4; iv, 38.

[18] The chronicles of Moissac, which had accumulated *two* lay abbots before the time when, rather unwillingly, it was put under the control of Cluny exemplify this. Almost immediately the arms of its lay abbots were shortened, and it began to regain lost properties.

Material prosperity is seldom good medicine for monkish virtue, and before the eleventh century closed the reform of the Cluniac reform had begun; not reform within that community, but by the formation of new and stricter orders. In these reforms monasticism branched out, specialized to some extent. The Carthusians, established in the mountain wilds of Savoy, encouraged meditative, semi-hermit life; the Premonastratensians were more an active order, engaging in parochial work in districts where their monasteries were situated, or becoming missionaries along the northeastern boundaries of Christendom. Most important of all, for European history generally and for us, were the Cistercians who, in their return to the primitive austerity of the Benedictine Rule, with some added austerities of their own, concentrated upon agriculture.

Agriculture, so close to primitive religion, had assumed new religious significance. There were still its uncertainties and mischances, with ceremonies to protect against them. In addition, the labor of the tilled field, so much the most conspicuous labor in medieval society, seemed the one particularly picked out by God as enjoined, in the primal punitive curse of Adam:

> Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles also shall it bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.[20]

Peasant and farm laborer might recognize this penitential task by endowing in commemoration an important window, for example, in a great cathedral.[21] The Cistercians made it the center of the active portion of their life, refused at the outset benefices and vested incomes, placed their monasteries in the wilds, felled forests, drained swamps, and put new land under cultivation, upon which both clerics and lay brothers, by thousands, labored daily; the science of agriculture profiting by their combined and organized experience, until the Cistercian Order became the most efficient and extensive agricultural enterprise of the Middle Ages.

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[19] Another rich and celebrated abbey of France, Mont St. Michel, accepted the Benedictine Rule in 996, began to prosper almost immediately, and was generously treated by the Dukes of Normandy, Gout, *Le Mont St. Michel,* I, 107ff.

[20] Genesis III. 17-19.

[21] The large window in the choir of the Cathedral of Tours, the medallions of which tell the story of the early chapters of Genesis, is plainly inspired by this idea, and is thought to have been placed there as the offering of some guild or society of farm laborers.

But for us the particular interest of this order arises from the fact that, in 1112, this struggling community, facing in the fourteenth year since its foundation serious difficulties, gathered in, together with some thirty relatives and friends unable to say no when he bade them become Cistercian monks, Bernard of Clairvaux.

Bernard was born in 1090, in a château upon the outskirts of Dijon, the capital of Burgundy. He was the third of seven children, of whom six were sons, and seems to have been the favorite of his mother, who exemplified the feminine virtues of the age, adding even an education unusual for her sex. On account of his delicacy of health and temperament the family intention was to train him, not to be like his brothers a knight, appropriate calling for the son of a brave knight and influential noble, but a clerk. He himself dreamed for a time of becoming a clerkly man of letters. A clerk and man of letters one was often, but not necessarily a monk, and as a monk one was by no means necessarily an ascetic.

> The very cloister itself of your monastery was frequently, they say, crowded with soldiers, occupied with the transaction of business, resounding with noise and quarrels, and sometimes accessible even to women.[22]

So he himself wrote to the Abbot of St. Denis, Suger.[23]

Within the year following the death of his mother, he turned from the diversions of an adolescent lord, with the decision to enter the most austere order of which he had heard. The very thought of its stern discipline frightened him; which fright doubtless but more firmly fixed his determination. He did not, however, make immediate efforts to enter; did not indeed enter at all until he had accomplished the task of taking with him four of his five brothers (the fifth entered the minute he was old enough) his closest friend, and several other friends and relatives.

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[22] Letter LXXVIII. The letters are quoted throughout in the English translation of Eales, from the edition of Mabillon. For the events of Bernard's life I have relied largely upon Vacandard, *Vie de St. Bernard.*

[23] This Suger was the most influential statesman of the realm of France, which he ruled when the monarch went upon the Second Crusade.

The influences of zeal, determination and argumentative persuasion by means of which this was accomplished are left to us to guess. The resources of persuasion of Bernard were great and their range may be suggested by extracts of letters written to parents of sons whom later he led to embrace the life of his community. Consoling the parents of one he writes:

> If you love your son, of course you will rejoice, because he goes to his Father and to such a Father as He. Yea, he goes to God. But you lose him not; nay, rather through him you gain many sons. For all of us who are in or of Clairvaux, acknowledge him as a brother and you as parents.
>
> But perchance you fear the effect of a severe life upon his body, which you know to be frail and delicate. . . . Reassure yourselves and be comforted. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. . . . I will be to him father, mother, brother, and sister. I will make the crooked "straight for him and the rough ways smooth."[24]

But for parents who aimed to defeat his purposes, and snatch away their son from his monastery he had very different words. To explain some of the verbiage of this letter, and perhaps also to emphasize its severity, it should be noted that it was written for the son himself to send as his own.

> What is there common between me and you? What have I from you save sin and misery? . . . Is it not enough for you unhappy ones, to have brought me unhappy into the unhappiness of the world; for you sinners to have given birth in your sin to me a sinner; but you must, by grudging me the compassion which I have gained from Him who willeth not the death of a sinner, make me besides all this, a child of Hell?
>
> O stern father! O harsh mother! O parents cruel and void of affection—nay, not parents at all, but murderers, whose only grief is the salva-

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[24] Letter CX.

tion of their offspring, whose only comfort the death of their son, who would rather perish with them than reign without them. . . .[25]

If sadist ferocity and brutal bullying are left aside, perhaps the cruelest persons are often those who may be the tenderest; persons of intense one-track minds, strong emotions, whose worlds are black and white, who love with a tenderness almost fierce, and hate with perfect conviction. To a person well-loved Bernard's letters might drop tears of humility and meltingly tender affection; [26] to the keenly critical, almost too agile-minded Abelard he could not be fair, could not even be decent, for here he was convinced, as one might say nearly always with Bernard, God was certainly on his side.

But, to return a moment to Bernard's entry, with his thirty followers of aristocratic birth, at Citeaux; it was an event of sufficient importance to place him immediately in an important position there, despite all the humility he went determinedly about cultivating. The order had begun in controversy, its first ten years had known many difficulties, it attracted few novices, and after fourteen years its future was by no means assured.[27] Almost immediately after his entrance things began to happen.

First of all they began to happen to Bernard himself. Of delicate nature, accustomed to such comfort as a twelfth-century castle afforded (small luxury to be sure, but at least comfortable well-cushioned beds, with sheets and coverlids well woven and often embroidered richly, a sumptuous dinner board, the consideration of a noble) with a sensitive dislike of dirt, he now began to sleep upon the roughest pallet of straw, with coarse wool underneath and over him, and to eat food no better and probably less abundant than the serf usually enjoyed. He slept in a crowded dormitory, surrounded by fellow monks who, according to the rules of the order, were not expected to bathe unless they were ill. Monks were allowed to shave seven times a year, but the luxury of a comb was denied them. Even the religious services and the abbey church itself were stripped of all ornament. He worked all day in the fields or, like the newcomers, at the vilest tasks about the monastery.

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[25] Letter CXI.

[26] Letter I is often quoted evidencing this, and it certainly displays Bernard in one of his most beautiful moods.

[27] Just how desperate was the condition of the order at his entrance is a matter of dispute. W. A. Philips, in *Encyclopædia Britannica,* says it was on the point of extinction.

Even this was not enough for Bernard. He enlisted all his determination in the desire to mortify his flesh beyond the requirements of his rule. He kept his eyes from regarding what was about him even to this extent that he lived an entire year in the hall of novices without having noted whether the ceiling was vaulted or flat. One thing he certainly found time to do: he read and reread the Bible, until he was able to quote it more richly and often than almost any other medieval writer. His letters and more formal works are full of quotations, quoted, one may be sure, almost always without reference to the text. In any sort of discourse whatsoever, upon any subject, he was always ready to uphold what he said with a fullness of Scriptural authority; and in all fairness to him it must be said that he quoted far less fantastically than many of his contemporaries.

Around him the first thing which happened was an almost immediate increase in the number of novices who came to Citeaux, an increase which went on continually at an accelerated rate. In less than two years this monastery was full to overflowing. Then, though not yet three years from the beginning of his novitiate, twelve monks, most of them older than himself, were confided to his care for the establishment of a daughter community at Clairvaux; in a little valley, its entrance choked with brush. Scarcely were they settled when Bernard fell ill; he was little better than semi-invalid all his life. Hardly more than on his feet again he was preaching round about, gathering in aspiring novices wherever he went; gathering in monks as well, snatched by him from laxer communities. We cannot follow this growth step by step. By the time Clairvaux had been established the monastery of Citeaux had five daughter monasteries. Between 1130 and 1145 not less than ninety-three monasteries were founded directly connected with Clairvaux. The Abbot of Citeaux remained nominally the head of the order, but already it centered about Bernard.

But the influence of the Abbot of Clairvaux was by no means confined to his monastery, or even to those connected by foundation with it. Just past his thirtieth year he had become one of the outstanding churchmen of France. But here even his influence was not to stop. At the age of forty he had founded the Order of Templars, and had made Innocent II pope, continuing to work tirelessly to gain friends for him, against a rival pope set up by the House of Hohenstauffen. The rival pope held Rome, and Innocent traveled from place to place, Bernard at his side and making friends for him, finally healing the schism and seating Innocent in Rome. When Louis VII wished to carry out a vow left unfulfilled by his father, it was to Bernard he turned to preach the Second Crusade, although this Bernard would not consent to do until the pope had ordered it. When heresy became troublesome in Aquitaine, Bernard was sent to cure it. Did secular or clerical dignitaries fall short of what he felt their duty, even kings or popes, Bernard was quick to rebuke them. Milman called him, during the period of his power, "the governing head of Christendom." [28]

So much, briefly, for his career; what as to his character?

The fundamental complexity of Bernard's character, truly among the simple of this world's great men, arose from the strife between an earnest attempt to cultivate humility, and a scarcely to be doubted passion to direct and rule.

> It is not the profession of a monk, which I appear to be, nor of a sinner, which I am, to teach, but to mourn for sin. . . . It is for this reason I have fled from the world and abide in solitude, and propose to myself with the prophet, "to take heed to my ways that I offend not with my tongue" . . . and while I desire to commend silence to you, I plead against silence by my loquacity.[29]

As to loquacity, he has left some five hundred letters, not to speak of tracts and sermons. As to offending with his tongue, even the most sympathetic critic must say of him, "Even in things which he knew well, carried on by zeal, he might be led to give to his phraseology an oratorical turn that forced and deprived of perfect ingenuousness the truth." [30]

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[28] *History of Latin Christianity,* VIII, 302.

[29] Letter LXIX.

His sincerity is hardly to be doubted. He entered no cause to gain for himself anything from it, save perhaps the passionate desire to see things go the way his mind and feelings had determined they ought to go. He was an almost untiring friend and advocate; but, despite pious peaceful phrases, he was a ruthless enemy. The pious phrases sometimes annoy. He writes, for example, in advocacy of the papal claims of Innocent, the pope whom he had seated:

> The question is, then, of ascertaining which of the two claimants is the rightful pope. As for that which relates to them personally, that I may not seem either to flatter or to detract from either one or the other, I will say nothing except that which is spoken everywhere, and which, I suppose, everyone believes, namely that the life and character of our Pope Innocent are above any attack even of his rival; while that of the other is not safe even from his friends.[31]

Such condemnation is so complete that it might well spare any words which feign too palpable avoidance of the act so effectively accomplished.

That Bernard strove diligently after humility one does not doubt. One is however almost forced to ask, and then to leave unsolved the question: Did his perfect conviction that he was doing the will of God make of him the tyrant that, with all his gentle exterior he was, or did his uncompromising attempt to gain humility save him from being a tyrant of a far uglier sort than ever at his worst he was?

Bernard was a child of the twelfth century; a child of passionate aspiration, and in thought a child beside Abelard, whom he so definitely worsted. He was a child too of a certain theology, which put emphasis in what seems to us strange places. In arguing as to the virtue of martyrdom he might discriminate between those who died for their faith, and those who died for reproving the lack of it in others, separating, as of higher virtue, the martyrs of the New Testament from those of the Old. And in the same connection he might urge that there were two things that made death precious, the *life* which preceded it, and the *cause* for which it was endured, of which the latter is the more precious.[32] This theology made it possible for him to say of Arnold of Brescia:

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[30] Vacandard, *Vie de St. Bernard,* I, xviii. The text of the statement is, "Même dans les choses qu'il sait très bien, il lui arrive de donner à sa phrase, qu'emporte le zèle, un tour oratoire qui force la verité et la dénaturé."

[31] Letter CXXVI.

> I wish he were of as sound doctrine as he is of strict life. And if you wish to know more, he is a man who comes neither eating nor drinking, but with the devil alone is he hungering and thirsting for the blood of souls.[33]

His popular influence derived from his gifts as a preacher, to which was soon added the working of miracles. No one perhaps in those days could have attained such influence without being a worker of miracles, since, having become the wonder of the populace, miracles would have followed him whether he wished or no.

That he was proof against temptation to exult inwardly, in spite of himself, at this power to move people, he does not convince us entirely. There is a note of exultation in the letter, part of which has already been quoted, announcing to the pope the result of his preaching of the Second Crusade.

The picture would be incomplete without mentioning his gentleness and sweetness. There is an almost feminine note in it, the very words of a devotee of the Virgin. This man, whom indomitable will and undivided conviction made hard, had great need of tenderness, giving and receiving. In the midst of a sermon to his monks he breaks down, mourning a brother recently died:

> My grief, and the pain which I am enduring, compels me to come to an end. . . . Mourn my sad lot, I entreat you, to whom these things are known. I was weak in body, and he sustained me; I was of feeble spirit, and he strengthened me; I was slothful and negligent, and he urged me on; improvident and forgetful, and he reminded me of my duty.[34]

Strange personality, hardly to be adequately judged by us to-day. It is not possible for us to altogether love him; intolerance has done too many hateful things, in which he himself had no small part. As we set him in his environment we may a little better understand him—and perhaps even in the beginning of understanding there is already the beginning of love.

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[32] Letter XCVIII.

[33] Letter CXCV.

[34] Sermon XXVI, on the "Song of Songs."

## XXXII

It has been said that the twelfth century was not to be understood by turning to the intellectual movements of the time. This will become clearer as we turn to consider briefly some phases of intellectual activity, particularly as bearing upon heresy, which, after a conspicuous absence in the West for centuries,[1] now reared its head importantly, in speculation and in broader religious practice.

In the latter half of the tenth century, a jealous German scholar sent a spy to report the words of Gerbert, who returned to convict him of heresy by reporting that "Gerbert subordinated physics to mathematics" in logical relation. Gerbert was able to avoid this taint by convincing an interested emperor that this report was false, as in fact he coördinated the two.

This occurrence may serve to briefly sum up for us several matters into which we can hardly enter historically. It means that, when philosophy revived in western Europe, it interested itself, at the outset, above all in logic. It further suggests, in the hint about heresy, that philosophy was clearly considered to be the handmaid of theology. Also it suggests that logical categories were matters of great importance, and that he who got his logical relations mixed was in danger of hell-fire.

The two important concepts at the outset were those of *genus* and *species*. Our use of such terms to-day is made most clear by considering it in the various special fields of biology. Here we think of them as class names for types of organisms grouped together because of some fundamental structural unity. Organisms having this fundamental unity may still differ considerably in more superficial characters of form or function, and so we may divide the large class into smaller classes. The members of all these subclasses are alike in the fundamental quality, but, as regrouped, they are also alike, among the subclasses, in further qualities, in which the subclasses in turn differ from one another. The more general and broad classes we call the *genus,* the subclasses under this genus we call *species.*

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[1] Priscillian was put to death for heresy at the end of the fourth century. Pelagius, already mentioned, was but a few years later. Despite authoritative disapproval of the mysticism of Scotus Erigena, speculative heresy had in the meantime not been important.

Such classification is convenient enough, simple and orderly, though there may be sometimes disputes when it comes to practical matters of classification which warn us not to take such class names too seriously.

With the philosophers of the dawn of medieval speculation these class names were by no means taken so light-heartedly. This was partly because Plato, looking around and finding things he saw in a rather sloppy condition (such as, that things which ought to be alike, because they were after all so generally alike, nevertheless exhibited disconcerting deformities and inconsistencies that much disturbed an orderly mind), concluded that the true reality rested, not in such disordered material, but in intelligible *forms;* ideas he called them.[2] With Plato's theory of ideas his pupil Aristotle was by no means content; so he went about discovering how, what we may roughly call reality, was arranged in a sort of hierarchy, through which one mounted discriminatingly from the disorderly particularities of things we see, toward more and more underlying, less physically discernible likenesses, till finally we reached *substance,* about which we could know little except by again replacing, step by step, the things which we previously had abstracted. It is however but fair to say of him that he was interested here, not so much in things, but in what we say about them; arriving at logical categories by analyzing sentences, coördinating them to the relations expressed in grammatical syntax; trying to learn, and to teach others to think accurately when they had observed painstakingly.

These early medieval thinkers were far more naïve than Aristotle. They were, in a sense, infants playing with sophisticated tools; and they took the tools much too seriously. They did not know Aristotle as a whole, and they mixed up Plato with him with little sense of where their confusion lay.

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[2] It is to be hoped that no one takes this to be more than a very rough suggestive outline of the significance of Plato's theory of *ideas.*

For a time, as in the case of Gerbert, they were able to keep their logical discussion free of mixture with theological questions. Then one Beranger of Tours applied the logical categories *substance* and *attribute,* which might be roughly defined as ultimate *being,* and the things which may be *said about* ultimate being (that is in logical phraseology predicated of it: note the subject and predicate of a sentence) to the nature of the *presence* of Christ in the bread and wine of the Christian eucharist. At a time when for most people the attainment of salvation was very largely a question of *putting on Christ* (in Pauline phrase) by actually partaking of his body and blood, such speculation was disturbing to the few who understood it, even though Beranger was really trying to explain, and not to refute, this doctrine. He was therefore forced to recant, and more than once.

Then Anselm, of whom we have already had occasion to speak, with perfect confidence in the reality of these logical categories, and a faith which accepted without reservation, as the basis of his thought, the doctrinal system in the state of development it was, set about to show that it was a faith consistent with logical reasoning. At the apex of this rational theology of his formulation, he placed a *proof* of the existence of God based upon logical form; assuming that the ability to say things about a substance in this case implied the existence of the substance about which the things were said. While it is impossible here to set forth even in briefest outline Anselm's systematic thought entire, a brief exposition of this *proof* serves to emphasize the sort of importance these logical categories enjoyed at the beginning of the twelfth century; and also as a suitable explanatory prelude to the controversy as to the nature of these categories which was to follow.

> If any man, says Anselm, either from ignorance or unbelief, has no knowledge of the existence of one Nature which is the highest of all existing beings, which (Nature) is also sufficient to itself in its eternal

> blessedness, and which confers upon and effects in all other beings . . . the very fact of their existence . . . he still believes that he can at least convince himself of these truths in great part, even if his mental powers are very ordinary, by the force of reason alone.[3]

How, briefly, is he to do this?

Man, conceiving an idea of God, thinks of his being as a being of the highest and completest perfection. But a being of the highest and completest perfection of whom men only *thought,* but who did not, further than the thinking of him merely, also *exist,* would be less perfect than a being of which one thought who, in addition, also existed in reality. For this reason a God who existed in thought only would not be the most perfect being conceivable. The most perfect being conceivable must not only be conceivable, but his highest perfection of all is just his existence. Therefore he must exist. Otherwise our thought of him falls into the inconsistency of calling a thing "most perfect and complete" which manifestly lacks something, without which it would be less perfect and complete than if it possessed that thing.

The criticism of this argument, which has since occupied the minds of a number of distinguished thinkers, lies aside from our purpose.[4] But, if we pass from the argument in question to the whole purpose of which it was a part, it reminds us that medieval thought was here attempting something, in a sense more daring, because vastly more complex, than what the ancient idealism had ever tried to do. The ancient idealism did not feel called upon to square, save in a rough suggestive way, its *ideas* with the world of material fact. That Highest Good, which represented for ancient idealism what God was for medieval thought, was not ultimately responsible for the material world, and therefore not for its roughness or disorder. Medieval thought, on the other hand, was bound to apply its ideas ultimately to the material world, since God was the creator of that world completely; not only idea, but matter as well.

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[3] Anselm, *Monologium* (abstracted from the first paragraph of chap. i).

[4] In brief and bare criticism, it may be said that, if the inconsistency implied is to be avoided, the proof must be restated somewhat as follows: If a being is to be thought of as the most perfect and complete, this being must be *thought of* as existing. So stated, however, we do not emerge from the world of thought. We do not have an existent God as a result, but merely a logically consistent concept.

The way that they first attempted to do so might well be likened, roughly suggesting its relation to the spirit of the twelfth century, to an attempt to lift Cluny Abbey, every stone intact, into heaven itself. In thought, logic becoming metaphysics, they attempted to do it by arguing that what we have above called class names, *genus* and *species* for example, were a sort of substantial entity, which substantial entity was *in* everything which belonged to the class. *Man,* for example, was not an abstract general term, under which, omitting differences between men, we lump their common qualities or attributes, but it was a *something in* every individual man.[5] Since it was a something behind all man's other qualities and attributes, it was in him entire, and not in some particular part of him; and it is this which makes it possible to use the analogy of lifting Cluny Abbey into heaven.

This attempt had hardly more than been stated clearly enough to betray its difficulties, in a treatise which bore the title "Concerning genus and species," when along came one of the keenest critical minds of the history of thought, Peter Abelard. Immediately, when the teaching of Abelard became popular so that students by the hundreds flocked to the University of Paris[6] to hear him, the Church found dangerous heresy confronting it. Almost immediately the attention of Bernard of Clairvaux was called to the things he dared to teach, and dire trouble for Abelard was immanent.

First of all, he shook the complacency with which many were attempting to frame a solid world with logical categories, in a definition of the significance of these universal class names, to which we shall return in a later chapter. But, more disturbing than this, he began to turn his critical analysis upon the writings which had come more and more to be authoritative, divulging the fact that, upon even very important matters the revered Fathers did not all think alike.

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[5] We omit here all reference to the difficulty, in this type of thought, of avoiding spilling over into some form of *pantheism,* the earliest type of speculative heresy of the Middle Ages.

[6] We cannot yet properly speak of the University of Paris as an organized entity, as there were three schools.

But here even he did not stop. His mind went about over dogmas, which had been accepted without critical thought, criticizing these in disconcerting ways.

> So the Holy Spirit and the Son are both *of* the Father; but one (the Son) is begotten, the other *proceeds*. . . . He who is begotten is of the very substance of the Father, because Wisdom (the Son) . . . is a certain power, while Love (the Holy Spirit) has rather to do with the goodness of the soul than with its power. . . . The Holy Spirit . . . is not properly speaking of the substance of the Father. This one may only properly say of the Son.[7]

All those years of controversy following the heresy of Arius, in which it was finally decided that all three persons of the Trinity were of one *substance* (*homoousios*) gone tottering!

Of the long-settled controversy as to the nature of the Son he also fell afoul; Christ, in his human personality, could not be a person of the Trinity. The Council of Chalcedon going to smash!

And as for sin, he was no better. Sin was *in the intention.*

> In placing the responsibility of adult man in the intention, he has arrived at the point, without wishing to do so, of precognizing a moral principle before which the absolute rule of morals bends.[8]
>
> I believe also that the Son of God was not incarnate to deliver us. . . . If mankind owed a ransom to God because of the sin of Adam, what will be the ransom for having killed God? . . . If God did not approve the killing of his Son, he at least found means whereby to utilize beneficially the voluntary sacrifice which the Son had made of his life.[9]

In short, wherever the mind of Abelard chose to rest, it touched vital matters in the structure of theology that had grown to be an accepted thing, and from his contacts flashed incisive fire of revolutionary opinion. Too much time had gone to the hallowing of things he was disturbing. Too many institutions might become wobbly were he allowed to continue. Perhaps, one might add, too

[7] Abelard, *Christology,* book iv; *Introduction to Theology,* 100ff.
[8] Vacandard, *Vie de St. Bernard,* II, 129-130.
[9] Quoted from Vacandard, *Vie de St. Bernard,* II, 133.

many trusting souls would have the underpinning of their lives swept from beneath them.

Bernard entered the lists. "Act for the place you hold, the dignity of your office, the authority you have received, in such a way that he who has exalted himself to heaven may be cast down to hell."[10] So he writes to the bishops and cardinals of the Roman Curia. Later he resorted to argument, in which he said little to any clear purpose. His invective was more efficient than his powers of reasoning. And anyway why reason, since as in refuting Abelard's views on the Trinity, he writes: "The blessed Pope Gregory denies plainly that faith toward God has any merit whatever if human reason furnishes it with proof.[11] Again why reason, since Bernard was the power of the century in everything which concerned religion? Abelard appealed to the pope and, though the papacy seemed less disturbed about the situation than he, Bernard had made this pope. Abelard was doomed from the beginning. He recanted, yet he could not but continue to think. Bernard was probably right in believing his opinions still fundamentally the same, and against his subtleties of thought could not feel secure. Abelard was silenced; he was crushed; he was a worn-out and disappointed man when death suddenly terminated his struggles.

In the meantime, in the most civilized portion of France, centered about the rich, luxurious, and cultivated court at Toulouse, the abuses of the clergy had become a popular butt. Troubadour poets did not hesitate to satirize clerics bitterly, and there was not among the prelates sufficient energy or seriousness even to take arms against their critics. At the beginning of the twelfth century a certain Pierre de Bruys began to preach, in the southeast of France, a persistent campaign against clericism. For twenty years he preached, with great popular following, before he was put to death in 1127 at St. Gilles. This punishment did not so much mean the beginning of reaction against the dominance of priestly prerogative in the religious institutions, as the beginning of a determination to draw more closely together the power of the organized Church.

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[10] Letter CLXXXVIII.

[11] Letter CXC.

Popular, as distinguished from speculative heresy, was less a thing which grew up, and grew into a power, than an evidence of disorganization which became more prominent as organization increased, and which itself drew together in opposition, proportionately as the force of the united Church was directed against it. It is probably difficult to exaggerate the smallness of the parochial oversight of ecclesiastical authorities, during centuries when the prelates were for the most part interested primarily in properties and revenues. Little islands of nonconformity existed in many places; popular teachers, with divergent doctrines, rose and fell, with larger and smaller bands of followers. Popular heresy hardly *began to be* at all. In and through it were vestiges of Christian belief and practices descending to the earliest centuries of the Christian community. Popular heresy was indeed something more to be likened to little hillocks and protruding rocks which become evident when one begins to lower the level of a lake, by drawing off its water into another reservoir. And, to a little farther follow the figure, when the process of organization and unification of the Church's power, which had begun in the eleventh century, had gone sufficiently far to set a new level for the vast reservoir of European religion, and make such islands visible, then heresy became important, first in the attempt to level, and hide beneath the new surface, every protruding height. We will, therefore, make no attempt to trace the beginnings of such heresy, but sketch briefly the first determined attempt of this leveling process.

This attempt began in this same most cultivated area of France, of which we have spoken, centered in Toulouse, the capital of Aquitaine, and became a crusade, the Albigensian Crusade. Here for the first time the papacy itself, in the person of that Innocent III of whom there has been already occasion to speak, turned the crusading spirit, drawn to a head by another pope, Urban II, against persons who were not, certainly in their own opinion and desire, followers of any other prophet than he whom the Church claimed to represent; and crusading became, with the highest official sanction, a new name for persecution.

These heretics of the Garonne Valley came to be known as *Cathari* (the Pure). In broadest analysis this means, and here was its popular appeal, an attempt to attain salvation by another means than that which the Church provided through the instrumentality of its priests. After all not a great deal is known as to its fundamental beliefs, as much of the evidence comes from its antagonists. Moreover we may be as certain here, as generally in the history of any religion, that for the most part people cared little about these fundamental beliefs. The vast majority wished only assurance of their lives beyond the grave, and had but lost confidence in the established priesthood as a means of procuring it for them. Take among the uneducated adherents of any organized form of Christianity to-day the statement that the Devil is the source of the evils and temptations they meet about them, and how many will not recognize such a statement as the most simple and obvious answer to any questions about the source of evil they may have cared to raise? Taken piecemeal, and not driven to any ultimate conclusion, the Church did not discourage such a belief. Go a step farther, and add that the Devil is the author of particular evils and temptations, because the Devil is the creator of that world in which the troubled human finds such ills, and few, without a very present monitor at their elbow, would hesitate to give consent to so plausible a solution of the more general question.[12]

This belief, roughly, was the fundamental divergence of this catharism from Christian tradition. It was a fundamental divergence which for a considerable time engaged the attention and adherence of Augustine himself, while he was a Manichæan.

Whatever is necessary to be said on this question has already been said, in pointing out the preoccupation with matter as the source of evil, and in considering Augustine's speculation as to this question. The speculative problem involved did not make the Albigensian Crusade, since the few who cared about it might have remained long hidden inconspicuous, insignificant, untouched by persecution. What made the Albigensian Crusade was the fact that the whole scheme of medieval life had been orientated toward a life after death, the keys to which were being more and more clearly placed in the hands of a certain organized priesthood. The popular mass, which made a crusade seem worth while, had merely turned, in lack of confidence, in disgust even, from the authoritative means of obtaining the universally recognized prize of life, unto the claims of others that it was they, rather than these priests, who could really assure them of its attainment.

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[12] For those who wish to know more concretely about the Cathari there are two articles of interest in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* ("Cathari" and "Albigenses") of which the author favors particularly the latter.

In short, popular heresy began to be significant popular heresy, in becoming strongly anticlerical just at the time when the clerical power was consolidating; and the heresy of Luther even, as we shall see, passed only beyond the bounds of possible compromise, when its anticlerical elements mounted to that point where it clearly involved the accomplished apex of clerical power, the papacy itself.

To return then to Pierre de Bruys; beginning with the general principle that salvation did not come to Christians through the instrumentality of priests, he followed his critique into many particularities. He rejected infant baptism; offerings, alms, masses and prayers for the dead; churches, as buildings sacred in any special sense; the Cross as an object of worship, since it was but the cruel instrument of Jesus' death. Finally, and most serious of all, he attacked the eucharist, become the central sacrament of salvation:

> Oh, people, believe not the bishops, the priests, and the clerks, who, as in much else, seek to deceive you as to the office of the altar, where they lyingly pretend to make the body of Christ and give it to you for the salvation of your souls. They plainly lie, for the body of Christ was once made by Christ, in the supper before the passion, and but once given to the disciples. Since then it has never been made and never given.[18]

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[18] Quoted from Lea, *History of the Inquisition,* I, 68. This is apparently the only authentic recorded utterance of Pierre de Bruys.

The burning of Pierre himself by no means extinguished his influence. Even the Abbot of Cluny was led to write a tract against him. Then an even more formidable successor arose to take his place; a certain Henry, of whose antecedents little is known, save that he was called the Monk of Lausanne, and is charged by Bernard with having irregularly left his cloister.

The people flocked after this Henry to an extent such as to leave the prelates of southern France helpless. As for the nobles generally, they were by no means fond of clerics, and would have been glad enough to seize the church property, as next natural inheritors in cases of dissension. Some were, in addition, convinced adherents of the movement. The prelates sent forth a call for help, and soon it was again Bernard of Clairvaux who stepped into the breach.

Bernard, half ill, was given energy by such a crisis. When the papal legate, sent to the center of the movement, had been met with asses and drums, in sign of derision, Bernard appeared at Albi (the city from which the crusade took its name) to be received with great curiosity, as the wonder-worker of the era, and with some success, it would appear. But the movement was so widespread that Bernard even condescended to offer to debate the matter publicly with Henry, who declined, fearing possibly a trap. Whatever the reason for Henry's refusal, it seems to have lost him powerful support he had enjoyed. He was soon captured, and died presumably in prison.

Whatever the immediate impression made by Bernard in the few places where he preached, this influence left with him. The movement continued to grow. By 1167 the heretics were numerous and strong enough to hold a council, in which they organized, with definite discipline and cultural enactments. Ten years later the Count of Toulouse, the most powerful noble in the south of France, wrote that the heresy had penetrated everywhere, had entered families, setting dissension between husband and wife, father and son, etc. Priests themselves had been gathered into the heretical fold, and churches were deserted and falling to ruin. Louis VII of France and Henry II of England meditated a punitive expedition to stamp it out, but their conversations resulted in no definite action. It is doubtful that the nobles of the south would have relished any more such interference then than afterwards. The Count of Toulouse did, however, raise his own military expedition, as an escort to the papal legate, the Abbot of Clairvaux (Bernard was now dead), with other prelates, who were to preach, and convert the heretics. They did arrest a preacher of the heretical sect, procured his abjuration, sentenced him to three years penance, in the form of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When, however, the three years had run, the heretic returned, apparently with no less influence than before.

Indeed, the heresy began to find stronger protectors. The Viscount of Béziers became its open defender, and even imprisoned the Bishop of Albi. The Count de Foix, and the Viscount de Béarn, at either end of the Pyrenees, the Viscount of Carcassonne, lord of the strongest fortress town in the valley which at the west opens the Mediterranean basin to the Atlantic and the center of France, joined forces with the heretics. The Count of Toulouse, though still for a time on the fence, was generally favorable. It is doubtful that religion occupied him so much as other things, since his court was perhaps the most pleasure-loving and licentious of the time. An implacable enemy of the heretics was appointed Bishop of Toulouse; a papal legate was sent there. Dissension arose; twice the Count of Toulouse was excommunicated by the papal legate. Then some retainer of the Count removed the troublesome legate with his sword. The pope's legate had been killed by a knight close to Raymond of Toulouse! The Count denied complicity, but Innocent III was now truly aroused.

The pope called upon the French king, Philippe Auguste, for assistance, but this king was having troubles of his own with the King of England.

> It is impossible for me to raise and support two armies at once, one to defend myself against the king of England, the other to march against the Albigensians. Let his lordship the Pope find the money and the soldiers, and let him, above all, compel the English king to rest in peace; then one might think of it.

Turning now against Raymond of Toulouse, the pope reiterated the excommunication already pronounced against him, dissolved all his vassals from allegiance, made, in effect, an outlaw of him. What most bothered Philippe Auguste in all this was fear that Innocent III should attempt himself to dispose of any fiefs which might be wrested from Raymond's hands.

Raymond bowed under the yoke, and humiliated himself in penance, though complicity in the murder of the papal legate could not be fastened upon him.

Meanwhile the crusade was authorized. In these words the contemporary chronicle, in verse, recounts the decision of Innocent III, in which he puts the crusade into the hands of the Order of Citeaux.

> "Brother," said the Pope, "go then to Carcassonne,
> Go to Toulouse, great city on the Garonne,
> Lead the armed hosts against the criminal folk,
> Pardon crusaders in the name of Christ,
> And in my name beg them, under oath,
> Pursue the heretics, mingled there with honest people."[14]

Among the leaders of the military host one Simon de Montfort soon became the acknowledged head. He was a scrupulous Catholic, whose religious motives were doubtless far purer than those of many knights in his train, but he was a hopeless bigot.

The crusaders turned first their steps against Béziers, the lord of which city had dared imprison a bishop.

> The Viscount of Béziers rested neither night nor day
> Putting his city in defense, for his courage was very great.[15]

Despite these pains the city was taken. Seven thousand persons, women and children included, were massacred in one single church. The riffraff of this crusading army began such a pillage as caused the better element to cast them out of the city, to which in revenge they then set fire. "The whole city was burned, its entire length and breadth." [16] Despite this misfortune the sanctity of the crusader's cause was soon attested by the discovery that the body of the murdered papal legate, when disinterred, was without sign of putrefaction, proving him to be a saint; and moreover the crusading army found an abundance of food, and camped three days in a green and fertile land—long enough to broil a frightened heretic who had abjured his heresy, but was burned anyway since, if his abjuration were a lie, he deserved the burning, and if it were sincere, God would know it, and the martyrdom would be for his everlasting salvation. The fourth day, "their standards raised and floating in the wind" [17] they set off for Carcassonne.

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[14] *La Canso de la Crozada* (ed. Meyer), vii.
[15] *Ibid.*, xv.
[16] *Ibid.*, xxii, l. 513.

Carcassonne was taken, its suzerain disappeared mysteriously, and the first prize was ready to be distributed. It fell to Simon de Montfort. All of his knights, and their retainers with them, began to depart. They had served time enough to earn the promised absolution of their sins. But not quite all; "I do not know whether there were nine or ten of them who stayed," the Chronicler says.[18] Quite naturally those who stayed were not those least interested by the possibility of annexing fiefs snatched from heretical lords.

We cannot here follow the fortunes of this crusade. More and more it became a scramble for lands. The question came before a council held in the Lateran Palace of the pope. The Count of Toulouse, the Count of Foix, appeared humbly to demand the return of their fiefs, swearing allegiance to the Catholic faith and Church in all humility. The pope heard their pleas, then retired with his clerics to consider the question apart. The prelates felt they would be safer in the hands of Simon de Montfort than in those of nobles who had a less rigid faith: "If you give them back their lands we are almost as good as dead; if you give them to Simon de Montfort, we are saved." [19] Simon got them. Every noble in the south of France against whom any plausible charge of heresy might be entertained found his castle invested, and was despoiled in favor of some lieutenant of Simon. Landless knights, Normans most of them, were established in this country, as they had in so many other places in southern Europe. Heresy became a matter no longer to be dealt with by armies and knights. People tired of bloodshed, all the attainted nobles had been dispossessed, and heretics could be handled singly, as they soon were to be handled singly, by the Inquisition.

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[17] *Ibid.*, l. 536.

[18] *Ibid.*, l. 829.

[19] The account of this council in the *Canso* already quoted is of a fullness tempting one to believe the author was present (cantos cxliii-cli).

## XXXIII

ABELARD'S incisive criticism, the stubbornness of heresy in Aquitaine, were ominous; but the omen was not for the immediate future. Abelard died conveniently enough, and the Albigensian Crusade laid in the dust all the political aspects of popular heresy. The pope came out of the crusade stronger than he went in, and even the King of France, who had declined to institute it himself, gained unexpectedly. In the empire, too, things were better from the papal standpoint, since the great nobles of the empire were gaining power to such an extent as to clip the emperor's wings, and make it possible to play them against the emperor, if this served papal politics. Moreover the Interdict, tested by Innocent on two important occasions, proved even more effective than he might have hoped, provided only it was used with statesmanlike caution.

We are, then, upon the threshold of the thirteenth century. The world was far more peaceful than a century earlier; the arts and interests of peace had grown proportionately. The intellectual horizon had widened, and underneath life, and its intellectual expression, was what might be termed a mild passion for dignity, decency, and order; a mild passion we may say, because there was no longer at its emotional center that burning ardor, nor in its fiber that uncompromising austerity, which caused the twelfth century to lay its offerings of hero worship at the feet of Bernard of Clairvaux. Also, the more brutal and crude elements of the religious emotion of this century were not exerted now at the center of religious life, but were rather exerted at its extremities, clipping and trimming more or less inconspicuously.

The grin of Romanesque art had become a gracious smile. A benign Savior, perhaps a Virgin smiling even in her aloofness, not the drama of the Last Judgment, may greet you at the portals of a church. Somehow it seems to have been arranged that the ascent to heaven was a less burden-bearing, somber affair, just as in the Gothic cathedrals, long, slender, almost threadlike pillar facets soared to arches high above, where they branched into light tendrils of ogival vaulting, spreading fanwise, supporting a ceiling of less apparent weight than many a passing cloud.

The world seems to have found something, lost for centuries. It has found a benign hopefulness. Through all its gravity it dares again to smile. If you wish to see that smile, stand in the nave of the cathedral at Amiens; let it permeate you from every aspiring curve and line; see it garlanded with the running flower molding beneath the arches of the triforium.

We are, let us say, in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. We have reached the culminating apex of the former half of our story. There is left for us to contemplate, as nearly complete in expression as vast social complexes ever are perhaps, what the Middle Ages in finished aspirations strove to be, before we begin, in another book, to trace still inconspicuous evidence that this finished expression of aspiration aimed to shut out factors, bound to be considered in the end, and soon to disturb that radiant equilibrium.

Here, no less certainly than in the case of the preceding century, it is impossible for us to hope to picture the spirit of religion in the thirteenth century by tracing even with the greatest brevity various threads of its religious life and activity. Theology was being ordered. This had been begun, with no particular brilliance but with comprehensive intention, by Peter Lombard in the preceding century. Monastic life, whether austerely or more urbanely exclusive, was more orderly and less extravagant, either in saintliness or worldliness. The Cistercians were no longer poor, though they maintained much of the austerity of their surroundings. They, rather than the monks of Cluny, were, at the beginning of the century, the monastic right hand of the pope. Papal policy had become more polished, more statesmanlike in its diplomacy, broader and more humane, despite the Albigensian Crusade. The theory of papal supremacy was no longer one of simple rival claims of pope and emperor. The French monarchy was an achieved affair, the Normans had brought England closer to the Continent, Italian cities were profiting by every moment of imperial weakness to strengthen their independence. In Germany the empire was coming into the period between the aspirations of the Hohenstaufens and those built upon a more complex basis by the Hapsburgs.

The rural classes were bettering their condition by gradually changing all the various feudal claims to personal service, and the more or less arbitrary share in their lives and the fruits of their toil, into definite periodic payments of money. Though we may not wish to go nearly so far as Violet le Duc, the growing influence of the cities, and a gradual shift of power from the rural centers, where feudal rulers held sway, to cities, upon which a king, or a few great nobles, might concentrate a wider domination, made the cathedrals, as monumental structures, now begin to overtop in pretentiousness even the most splendid abbeys.

Education had become much more general, and along with this, secular literature had broadened out tremendously. The universities drew in scholars from all social classes, and while all scholars were still clerics (clerks) in some degree or other, this might be little but a formality, which did not necessarily apply any active connection with the organization of the Church, and, provided they remained in the lower orders, it did not necessitate a vow of celibacy.

The twelfth century, it has been said, even its religious aspirations, cannot be adequately comprehended in the mirror of its intellectual efforts and achievements. With equal degree of truth it may be said that, precisely in its intellectuality, the aspirations of the thirteenth century can be most characteristically and comprehensively understood. Its faith was dogmatic, to be sure. All the powers of Church and State were ready, too ready as we judge, to enforce this faith even by brutal methods. None the less, up to the full stretch of its patience, it aimed to be reasonable, persuasive.

Imagine, for example, two men—both pious according to their different temperaments, neither to be accounted properly intellectuals—seated together in conversation. The two men are Louis IX, King of France (St. Louis) and his biographer, De Joinville.

> "Senechal," said he, "what is God?" I replied, "Sire, it is that thing which is so good that nothing could be better." . . . "Truly you have answered well," he said, "for the answer you have made is written here, in this book that I hold in my hand. Now, I ask, which would you prefer, to be a leper, or to have committed a mortal sin?" [1]

De Joinville answers without hesitation, that he would prefer rather to have committed thirty mortal sins than to be a leper. So nine men out of ten would doubtless have answered, and Louis persuades him that he is wrong, since death would cure his leprosy, but could not expunge his mortal sin.

Here you see the thirteenth century: first authority, second a superstitious regard for books (St. Louis approves De Joinville's answer, for he has found it in a book), third a desire to reason and persuade. People do not, indiscriminately or pell-mell, rush to cloisters or crusades, though they may some of them do these things. They go about their business with more conviction and security than before—not merely with more political and economic security and conviction, but with more religious security and conviction, and they love to sit down and reason about the things they consider of greatest importance.

And, so far as one can ever get the whole truth by such ruthless abstraction, they do so because the *proof* of the existence of God upon which they rely is no longer the bare ontological argument of Anselm; dry bones of logic which leave out every material thing, and have upon them no meaty scrap of anything to which the senses testify. The proof of God has come to be for them an ordered universe, existent for them when they thought for this, and when they thought for this alone, that it was a vast, comprehensive symbology of God.

> Since every active being aims to induce its own likeness in the effects it produces . . . the agent will do this the more perfectly the more perfect it itself is. But God is the most perfect active being: therefore it

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[1] De Joinville, *Histoire de St. Louis,* IV.

> will belong to him to induce his likeness in creation most perfectly. . . . But creatures cannot attain to any perfect likeness of God so long as they are confined to one species. . . . Multiplicity therefore, and variety was needful in creation, to the end that the perfect likeness of God might be found in creatures according to their measure.[2]

This means, when we descend to less abstractly speculative realms, that faith has attained, even for the more practical people, a new aspect: that of knowledge. Footmarks of this new enthusiasm may even be found in strange places. De Joinville wrote an exposition of his Creed, matter-of-fact man of rather mundane piety that he was. In a sentence of it he says: "Now therefore we see that two things are necessary to our saving—to *know* (how) to do good works, and how to believe firmly." [3]

Salvation ceased to be such a simple thing: a door, figuratively, fronted the farther side by Christ upon a throne to judge, with the Virgin on his right to plead for those she wished to save, who might then be gathered, like infants, in the generous lap of Abraham the Patriarch; the Devil on the other, to snatch and roast the damned. Neither all sins nor all good works are equal; nor all rewards and punishments.[4] Therefore the intricate order of the damned, of the sinners in purgation, of the blessed, in the *Inferno.* the *Purgatorio,* the *Paradiso,* of Dante's *Divine Comedy.*

And, since all knowledge was, ultimately, knowledge of God, revealed piecemeal in his symbolic universe, in varying degrees of mounting significance, the first task of knowledge was that of setting things in their appropriate order: "They are called wise who put things in their right order:" [5] Thomas Aquinas has chosen to put this in the first sentence of his most encyclopædic treatise.

Man is saved by *doctrine;* in which there is theoretical doctrine first, to teach him wisdom, practical doctrine to teach him virtue, mechanical doctrine, to instruct him how to use the instrumentalities which help him provide against sickness and bodily need.[6]

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[2] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa ad Gentiles,* II, xlv.

[3] De Joinville, *Credo,* par. 5 ". . . ce est à savoir: bones ouvres faire et fermement croire."

[4] Aquinas, *Summa ad Gentiles,* III, cxli, cxliii.

[5] *Ibid.,* I, i.

[6] So is constituted the order of the *Mirror of Doctrine* of Vincent of Beauvais, the most prominent encyclopædist of the thirteenth century.

Let us say then, in a rough figure of speech, that, the twelfth-century religious aspiration might be likened to a flattened pyramid, based upon crude effort, made by its faith more dogged, patient, and resigned; upon which, more narrowly superimposed was voluntarily inflicted effort, in ascetic discipline; and that from the top of this flattened pyramid, human beings, seeking salvation in the heavens, strove by their emotions to leap into a state of blessedness. Let us further say that, upon this flattened pyramid of aspiration, the thirteenth century strove to set an intellectual apex, the point of which was at the feet of God Himself.

This apex is, above all and most generally representative of all its forms, a particular sort of philosophy. It is a type of philosophy which built, painstakingly, stone on stone, with logic for mortar, logic *formal* to be sure, but close and subtle, the most airy intellectual structures. It is a philosophy the basis of which is dogmatic. It is a philosophy which seems to be built from the top down; but that is because we forget that its foundation is in heaven, and that from there it balances nicely, a pyramid set upon its point. And we must view it so to appreciate how what seems to us its airy crowning pinnacle, is in reality its foundation, from which one dare hardly chip the tiniest shred without endangering it altogether.

It might be added that it is a philosophy with which the contemporary mind, generally speaking, has no patience at all. This is not because it is dogmatic, since we have by no means outgrown the possibility of swallowing our fairly generous doses of dogma, living daily upon them, and finding ourselves well fed. It is rather because it is so obviously evident that, once we touch the ultimate dogma to alter it, there is no longer anything to study, save for those curious to consider human mental labor and ingenuity.

This being the case we will not linger to trace the steps by which the philosophy came to its fullest systematic form, but rather jump to its most complete expression in the system of Thomas Aquinas, and stay with it there but for the briefest moment; before passing to a fuller, and more emotional expression of thirteenth-century religious aspiration, in the Gothic cathedrals.

Thomas Aquinas came rather late in the movement we call Scholastic philosophy. He was not born until 1227, and as we shall see his world was no longer as safe as it had been, when he began to give it ordered expression in his system. He was a Dominican Friar, and we have not yet had occasion to mention his order. He was engaged in a controversy as to freedom of teaching with the University of Paris, and we have not yet had occasion to trace the gathering of intellectual authority into authoritative places, which was a symptom of intrenchment, that meant a step toward the acknowledgment of possible defeat. So too it is with social systems; they have not been crowned with what seems to be order and completeness, before silently, all but unperceived, the forces of demolition have already been long at work.

Aquinas systematized theology for the Medieval Church; he systematized their ethics. But with these systematizations we will not occupy ourselves. It is more than enough when we confine ourselves to his monumental summary of Christian apologetic, a summary for unbelievers (*Summa ad Gentiles*),[7] as he called it.

It is only near the beginning of his second book that Aquinas explains his method of procedure:

> In the system of faith, which studies creatures only in their relation to God, the study is first of God and afterwards of creatures; and this is the more perfect view, and more like in manner to the knowledge of God, who, knowing himself, thence discerns other things.[8]

This may seem a presumptuous manner of proceeding, even from his own standpoint, since it implies that we must think *with* God, rather than *toward* him; but what of that, since it has already been said that we must conceive this edifice as from the floor of heaven, not from what may at first sight appear a broader earthly foundation?

However, Aquinas is true to his method. His first book treats, generally of God, as He is in His own essence and being. He notes, however, that there are things about God which reason unaided never could discover, such as the fact that "God is Three in One." [9] Revealed knowledge of God is therefore first required, since without it the highest human reason could never know some things about Him, which it is necessary that he know for his salvation. But even some things which the most accomplished and persistent human reason may discover would remain unknown, save for revelation, because of the less accomplished reasoning powers, the more practical preoccupations, or the sloth, of the majority; so that even things which the reason might discover were "commanded to be held on faith, that all might easily be partakers of the knowledge of God, and that without doubt and error." [10]

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[7] The word *gentilis* has many significations. Most particularly, in ecclesiastical uses, it means pagan, or unconverted. Obviously Aquinas intended his *Summa* more broadly than this, and it might be called a Summary to doubters in general, whether troubled believers or outspoken doubters.

[8] *Summa ad Gentiles,* II, iv.

So the truth of reason and the truth of faith do not conflict. Faith complements the highest reasoning, and may with security be taken to supplant the necessity of any speculative reasoning at all. Where could be found a more comforting philosophy? It seems to say; believe and you need not bother to speculate at all; speculate, and you are not less safe, provided only you speculate with Thomas Aquinas.

The point of view, however, is far more intellectualistic than that of Anselm. For Aquinas faith is, to the philosopher, a compromise; it gets him farther than he could go without it. With Anselm faith is a disposition, without which one could not get anywhere at all, along the way both of them alike were attempting to travel.

As to the proofs of God's existence, Aquinas falls back upon five. Three of these five are based upon certain requirements of the mind: it cannot think of motion without positing a condition of rest; it cannot think of an infinite causal series without positing a *first cause;* it cannot think of accidental, or contingent beings, without assuming the existence of a necessary being. The other two are based upon more direct reflection upon the material universe as it appears: the various forms of existence noted in the universe appear to approximate toward a certain perfection, which

[9] *Ibid.,* I, iii.
[10] *Ibid.,* I, iv.

implies the existence in being of that perfection they mirror; and there appears to be an intelligent order in the universe, which implies an ordering creator.[11]

We shall not stop to discuss these forms of proof. It may be noted, however, that they differ all of them in intention from the proof of Anselm; for all of them aim to interpret the universe, make it understandable, by inferring the existence of God. They might be called the descending curve of a circle, which descending curve, with the symbols of logic, puts God into the universe. We are turned now to the ascending curve of that circle where, in a hierarchy of more sensible symbols than those of logical abstractions, the mind attempts to raise itself toward God.

Aquinas assists us in this ascent, by simplifying matters. In telling us that revealed faith parallels, in a simpler and more complete way, the more abstract and difficult mounting course of reason, he allows us to leave aside reason at this point, and turn to the symbolism of religious doctrine, as developed during the centuries of Christian history up to his time, and translated, in the ceremonial of the Church, and in the art of church edifices themselves, into a sort of material universe of *signs.*

The central ceremony of the Church, the mass, had been interpreted as an intricate allegory. The church edifices had come to be interpreted also as an allegorical background of this ceremony.[12] We turn to them, in their most finished and imposing form, to complete our picture of the ordered aspirations of the thirteenth century.

The most complete architectural expression of Christian religious aspiration is, of course, the Gothic cathedrals. In order to comprehend them, both historically and artistically, some knowledge of the essential principles of structure are indispensable.

The rationale of the Gothic structure is a new departure, a fresh creative principle. None the less this principle sprang so naturally from the problems met by Romanesque architecture, as it strove to build larger, higher, less clumsy, and less somber structures for purposes of worship, that two of its typical features, the pointed arch, and the ogival vault, had both been incorporated into Romanesque architecture before the Gothic was born. Even its birth is more or less a mystery. So inevitable is its logic, that, somewhat as the mathematical calculus, it may have been contemporaneously invented in more than one place, and by more than one mind.

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[11] These five proofs are developed, not in the work we have been considering, but in Aquinas' theological summary (*Summae Theologicae*), book i, question ii, art. 3.

[12] Guilelmus Durandus crowned this work of symbolical interpretation of the Christian liturgy at the same time that Aquinas taught his philosophy (approximately) in his *Rationae divinorum officiorum.*

The Romanesque church was a walled structure with a vault of masonry to cover it and support its roof. In its essence a Gothic church was no such thing: it was an intricate system of arches, resting upon pillars. In all but the outer portion of this system, where the gaps between the pillars were to be closed with windows, each of these pillars was bound to the eight nearest adjacent pillars, front, back, right, left, and in four diagonal directions, by arches. The simplest complete element of such a system would consist of nine pillars, equally distant in the cardinal directions, bound together by twenty arches. If one visualize such a structure it is immediately evident that to enclose it with walls would add practically nothing to its stability. Its weakest points are the four corners, where the pillars are bound to other pillars but in three directions. These pillars need exterior support; the pillar must be broadened at its base, becoming generally triangular buttresses placed diagonally to the structure, perhaps, or doubly buttressed, so that the cross section is "L" shaped. There remain four other exterior pillars, tied-in to others in but five directions. They too demand support on the exterior side, though less than the corners, and they too become buttresses.

So the structure is essentially complete. If you wish to give it a ceiling, every triangular space enclosed by the side faces of the arches is a spherical triangle; thence every linear section of the filling will be arch-shaped. Stone, brick, or tile, may be wedged securely into the spaces on the principle of the arch. Moreover, such a ceiling is hardly embarrassing to the structure. Compensating for its weight, it increases the stability of the structure. At most it requires but a small amount of added strength in the outside buttressed pillars. Walls are, to be sure, an embarrassment, since they are like sails, to hold the force of the wind, and they can add nothing of stability to counterbalance this embarrassment. Make them of colored glass in little morsels set in lead, if you will. This structure asks nothing of its walls, save just to keep the out-of-doors outside. It is again the buttressed outer pillars which must be strengthened in compensation.

Of course a Gothic cathedral was no such simple structure of nine pillars. At Cologne, the largest and most fully developed of them, there are one hundred twelve pillars. But this increase lightens the structure proportionately. With our nine pillars eight must be buttressed. At Cologne sixty, a little more than half, of the pillars are interior, and need no buttress reinforcement.

The high nave, flanked by lower aisles (an inheritance of ecclesiastical architecture from long before the Romanesque) added a difficulty. Without departing from the essential structural principle, this difficulty was solved. The outside buttressed pillars of the aisles were carried far above its roof line, and tied-in above to the exposed flanks of the nave with arches—flying buttresses they called this combination of buttressed pillar and arch.

Here were all the structural essentials of the Gothic cathedral. Size, proportion, added aisles or chapels, the number and position of towers, all fell together logically within this rigid, yet generously adaptable scheme. In a sense one might say that its logic was too simple. Too soon, and too readily, it became a formula; then architects began to sin against its formula, making structures which appeared too light, or against its multiplication of symmetrical units by making them too dry, and people began to bedeck the structure with unessential frivolous ornament. But this is aside from our present interest.

Here then, is the structure. What of its characteristics and decoration possibilities?

Note first that all its lines of strength are vertical: pillars, buttresses. Even the horizontally binding arches soar to points. It seemed as if the aspiring naves would never cease going up and up until, late in the thirteenth century at Beauvais, where the arches rose more than one hundred fifty feet of clear space above the floor beneath, the vaulting of the choir collapsed. Even this was not due to the principle or plan, but to poor workmanship.

Towers belonged rather to the Romanesque, and the most dignified and majestic of them are often of the older school. None the less the Gothic took them in as logically as if it had invented them. The ideally typical Gothic cathedral provided logical place for six, though this completed form was never achieved.[18] But pinnacles were the Gothic's own. Every buttressed outer pillar aspired beyond the roof, ending in a pinnacle which seemed to be off in the thin air toward heaven; or in the statue of an alighted angel, just descended. The few spires of a Romanesque church seemed to say that the way was narrow, and the gate was contracted, leading to eternal life. The pinnacled Gothic spoke of many mansions, or ordered degree of blessedness, grouped about the throne of God.

Looking at the solid elements of the structure, we find few flat spaces of any size. Laterally there are the window spaces, deeply recessed, however, between the heavy bases of the buttresses, which throw dark shadows across them vertically. From the standpoint of decoration they belong to the interior. Here they are like hung tapestries, woven in colored light, which tell the stories of the saints, or picture in symbols contemplative mysteries.

There were, however, three places where the structure was, in a sense, arbitrarily cut off: the end of the nave, opposite the altar, and the ends of the two transepts (or arms of its cross-like form). These ends might, in principle, be imagined almost flat, cut by a minimum of buttresses. Of course they were not left so. None the less here was a vast space, organically one, divided symmetrically, with certain divided elements which arose from the structure, which, while it did not lend itself to a single decorative subject, did lend itself admirably to a nicely ordered and subordinated grouping of related subjects for artistic presentation.

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[18] In Violet le Duc, *Dictionnaire Raisonne de l'Architecture Française, etc.*, II, 324, there is an ideal exemplification of the completed scheme which supports seven towers. One erected at the crossing, however, disturbs the harmony of the interior, and such central towers fall more appropriately into the Romanesque.

Of these three ends, the end opposite the main altar was naturally the most important. Here, since we cannot stop to consider completely the symbolical decoration of an entire Gothic cathedral, we may get an insight, and never perhaps better anywhere else, into the idealistic content of the spirit of the thirteenth century; because, in the century, ordered religious aspiration aimed to gather into itself, and into the Church, every element of human aspiration, and put it in an appropriate place in its scheme of salvation.

We may well begin with three principles of thirteenth-century ecclesiastical art which have been formulated for us. First, it is a sacred writing, of which the artist should learn the elements. Second, its symbolism obeys the rules of a sort of sacred mathematics; placing, ordering, symmetry, number, are of extraordinary importance. Third, it is a symbolic language which, in what it says directly, invites us to contemplate a deeper allegorical meaning.[14] Now, again, to our structure.

The most important elements of this nave end, where we are concentrating our attention, are three doors. Of these doors the center one is naturally the most important. The doors of a church, in the comprehensive symbology of the Middle Ages, are, as doors to a church, doors to the Church, therefore doors to salvation, as the Church was, in effect, the dispenser of salvation. The most important and direct way into the Church, and thence into salvation, was Christ. So, above this central door, we may expect to find Christ portrayed. *How* he is portrayed is a matter of the disposition of the time in which the portal was built, or perhaps a matter of the disposition of the person who was in a position to dictate the choice of subject to the artist. As we have noted before, he is often portrayed as the final Judge. Again he may be portrayed in a somewhat remote and dazzling glory. At Chartres he is portrayed as a benign Savior.

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[14] These principles are taken from Male, *L'Art Religieux du XIII$^e$ Siècle en France,* chap. i. It should be added that it is Male who, above any other person, has contributed to making what follows almost a commonplace, and to whom the author is much indebted.

But we have noted that the Virgin was a much favored way of approaching Christ and thus salvation, and in consequence we may find her, enthroned most often, above the door to the right of the central door, which leads into an aisle of the cathedral. In addition, almost every church, or city, or district, was likely to have a favorite saint. If so he is often found above the left-hand door. Often there are other doors at the ends of the two transepts. Here the symbolism of the portal may be carried still farther, as is the case at Chartres. The colder, northern door may be devoted to the Old Testament; a more forbidding and less direct way to salvation, but a way none the less, since, in the settled conviction of the Church, in its most important essence the Old Testament prophesied the coming of Christ. The more cheerful, sunny southern porch symbolized the New Testament. But we must return to the most important, the central western door.

We may expect to find, above this door and enclosed by the arch which surmounts it, the figure of Christ. With and beneath him we are likely to find the twelve apostles. If he is portrayed as Judge, we may find beneath his feet the blessed at the right, the damned at the left. Above is always, and naturally enough, a place of more distinction than below, and similarly the right takes precedence over the left, everywhere in this art. The arches which surmount the portal are not likely to be simple, but composed rather of a number of concentric arches. These concentric bands portray the blessed, in appropriate order of blessedness. At Notre Dame de Paris, reading inward, from lesser to greater, we find patriarchs, prophets, confessors, martyrs, virgins. The order may be more ecclesiastical; laymen, monks, priests, bishops, archbishops, with a pope and an emperor, both of them saints, at the summit.[15] Above the saints there may be choirs of angels and, if so, arranged

[15] In the south porch at Chartres.

in their hierarchy; from seraphim, through nine orders, to simple angels.[16]

But the symbolism by no means stops here. In intention a place must be found for everything, since all life is to be gathered up, gathered into the church, and given its appropriate place in the comprehensive scheme of salvation. Physical labor is represented, linked to the seasons of the year, or with more completeness to the months, or to the signs of the zodiac. The arts and crafts are fitted in. Science and speculation have their places.

All this again is bound together by the mysterious sacred efficacy of numbers. Three, four, seven, twelve; these are numbers of particular symbolic significance. And there is a balanced symmetry of symbolism. Prophets balance apostles, standing opposite to the left, while the apostles occupy the place of higher precedence at the right. At times, rather ridiculously it seems to us, each apostle is borne upon the shoulders of one chosen as the particularly appropriate prophet to be linked with that apostle.[17] The seven divisions of medieval education, the trivium, and the quadrivium, may be represented. Virtues and vices may be balanced; ecclesiastical virtues and practical virtues. If events historical, taken from the New Testament, are portrayed, they may be linked, one with one, to events of the Old Testament which are supposed to be prophetic of the particular event in the New.

We have sketched this encyclopædic intention of medieval art with almost ruthless brevity. We have scarcely attempted to even touch it beyond the portal of the edifice. It extends throughout the structure, in everything (though we must not be too exacting, for there were divergencies). Is it, however, enough to show, this little that has been said, how the Church, in its finished work of the thirteenth century, aimed to embrace, in an ordered way, all the ideals and activities of man? This is our hope and guiding intention. From this point we shall see, little by little, scraps and shreds, then more and more important issues, framed of man's interests and aspirations, slip from the hands of that organization come more and more to center its power and influence in Rome; slip from the hands of any religious organization at all; detach themselves from any sort of religious inspiration.

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[16] This order of the angels was established by Dionysius the Areopagite (or he who posed as such in the sixth or seventh century).

[17] As, for example, in four large windows of Chartres.

This ordered aspiration, as completely realized perhaps as vast human aspiring social programs ever are, has, when we view its ideal aspect, a beauty for which one easily becomes apologist. In our modern time even, many pore over it sighing that it might return. It so obviously held things precious that we have almost lost all touch with, that some feel in themselves a willingness to accept its major premises for no other reason, very profoundly, than just a means of grasping those things a little more solidly than they feel otherwise possible in our modern world. It needs perhaps a little our praise for this, that we too readily assume that we are happier now than were the people living then. This is perhaps a hard question to answer, and yet, so far as one may judge, in the spirit of the things one age leaves to be contemplated by ages after, there are few periods in the world which breathe the serenity, vigor, clarity, conviction, and general sense of peace that seemed for a little time to have been exhaled by the spirit of the earlier thirteenth century, and was left, like a vapor upon the clear pane of human history, in works of art and intellect.

As for criticism, time is the best critic of aspiring human programs. We have mounted to the apex of a certain vision of human life. It still remains ours for contemplation; it does not, could not remain ours in any other sense. Time found its flaws, aided, as always, by men who found in it their opportunities to exploit it for themselves, and for themselves at the expense of whoever or whatever was incidentally affected.

# BOOK VI

# MEDIEVALISM ON THE DECLINE

# XXXIV

It is very necessary to know how to eat properly. Neither laugh too much nor talk too much at table. Don't choose the best morsels for yourself. Never take a mouthful either too hot or too large. If you are a guest, don't eat too much, and don't find fault with the food offered you. Wipe your mouth, but don't wipe your eyes and nose, on the tablecloth.[1]

A DESIRE for decency and order can scarcely be expected to confine itself to the exalted plane of formulated philosophy and religious symbolism. People who might strive more reasonably, more delicately, along a broader way, and with more complicated baggage, upon their journey toward heaven, might also be tempted, with more catholic and discriminating choice, to linger here and there, plucking, as incidental to a pleasanter earthly pilgrimage, some quickly fading, but none the less desirable blossoms by the wayside. Peter Damiani might look upon the flesh as filthy excrement and disintegrating dust, but courtesy and cleanliness had after all much palliative efficacy. When a fair lady had pared her finger nails close to the flesh, in the interest of cleanliness,[2] she might regard her beauty in a mirror with a carved ivory back, and linger afterwards to contemplate the courtly love-making portrayed upon its case's top and bottom, where a knight knelt before his ladylove, almost forgetting the falcon perched upon his other wrist, as he caressed her chin in gentle fashion.[3] As the century of the *chemise* approached,[4] all the accessories of toilet, boudoir and table became more finely wrought and luxurious. There were relatively fewer wars, and more agreeable and brilliant tournaments, "to which some of the knights came to satisfy knightly ambition, others because of the ladies." [5]

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[1] Robert de Blois, *Le Chastoiement des Dames* in paraphrase of Langlois, *La Vie en France au Moyen Age,* II, 201.

[2] Robert de Blois, *Le Chastoiement des Dames.*

[3] Mirror case in the Louvre.

[4] So the fourteenth century has been called, because of the daintiness and elaboration this garment achieved in that century.

Under such circumstances it was not to be wondered at if some people began to be less sure about heaven.

> In Paradise what have I to win? Therein I seek not to enter, but only to have Nicolette, my sweet lady, whom I love so well. For into Paradise go none but such folk as I shall tell you of now: Thither go these lame old priests, and halt old men and maimed, who all day and night cower continually before the altars and in the crypts; and such folks as wear old amices and old clouted frocks, and naked folks and shoeless, and covered with sores, perishing of hunger and of thirst, and of cold, and of little ease. These be they that go into Paradise, with them have I naught to make. But into Hell would I fain go; for into Hell fare the goodly clerks, and goodly knights that fall in tourneys and great wars, and stout men-at-arms, and all men noble. With these would I liefly go. And thither pass the sweet ladies and courteous that have two lovers or three, and their lords also thereto. Thither go the gold and the silver, the cloth of vair, and cloth of gris, and harpers, and makers, and the prince of this world. With these would I gladly go, let me but have with me Nicolette, my sweetest lady.[6]

It was not necessary, to be sure, to be so uncompromising. One might attend *mass* daily, incidentally shortening with passed notes the arduous period of a clandestine courtship, mounting, two words at a time, question and answer alternate days, to the fixation of the definite assignation.[7]

How much simpler a thing it is to condemn life utterly, assenting in theory, even though you do leave to some picked few the task of living it out, than it is to try and pick your path with care among pleasant things which must for the large part be avoided! Poets had taken a hand at making love, and lovers had taken a hand at being poets. This did not make it easier to leave this troublesome matter where disgusted pagans and zealous Christian ascetics had attempted to place it. Love "entreats and commands" the writing of a romance, in which not only the entire "art of love is enclosed," but which draws into it an encyclopædia and satire of the contemporary world entire, *The Romance of the Rose.*

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[5] Ulrich von Liechtenstein, *Frauendienst,* quoted from Von Gleichen-Russwurm, *Ritterspiegel—Romanische Zeit,* 369.

[6] *Aucassins et Nicolete,* vi: 24ff. Trans. by Andrew Lang.

[7] Reference to *Flaminica,* one of the most popular romances written in the thirteenth century for the ladies of the time.

But, the plucking of the rose become life's great adventure brought with it further consequences.

J'ai les mignottes ceinturières,
J'ai beaux ganz à demoiselètes
J'ai ganz forrez, doubles et sangles,
J'ai de bonnes boucles à cengles.[8]

I have darling little girdles,
Such nice gloves for little maids!

So the peddlers sang, and someone had to make the gloves and girdles; someone had to find the money to buy them. And burghers busy making gloves and girdles didn't propose to interrupt trade for the fighting of wars which might provide nobles money with which to buy them. "A clothmaker's business is to make cloth; an orderly and decent shopkeeper's business is to mind his shop. What, you lordly gentlemen, is it to us, your eternal fighting about inheritances and boundary lines?" [9]

This was not all. There is always danger in formulating too precisely ideal aspirations. Not only do these formularies turn to judge the society in which they are drawn together, but the society also may turn around and judge the formulary.

No longer did *clerk* and *cleric* mean precisely the same thing. A large proportion of those who flocked to the universities no longer looked to rise to preferment in the hierarchy of the Church. Many remained in the lower orders, which left them freer. Many wandered from university to university, picking up a living in various ways; became the civil servants of rulers, poets, literary hacks, troubadours. Literature was escaping more and more from the hands of monks and prelates, and developing always broader interests. The pen of the satirist slipped into secular hands. "There is perhaps one black monk (Benedictine) in forty who conducts himself consistently," one says. "The white monks (Cistercian) are rich and pitiless, even to one another,"[11] writes another.

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[8] From thirteenth century poem presenting a peddler's crying of his wares.
[9] Jacob van Artevelde, leader of a bourgeois revolution in Ghent.

And monastic life was attacked from still another angle:

Alas for my young days!
Alack for my yearning plaints!
They are forcing me into a cloister.
There never again shall I see
Foliage, lawns, bloom and clover-meadows,
Nor hear the little song-birds warble.
This, this is my dread,
And my joy is dead,
Because they will take me away
From all my loved friends.[12]

Such complaint in itself was doubtless no new thing. For long young women had been forced, some of them by various pressure of authority and circumstance, to renounce a world for which they inwardly still sighed. But individual tears for personal misfortune are not social criticism likely to be listened to. Voiced by a poet they are taken up together, thousands of them, given not only poignancy, but a certain universality, which made of them no longer mere personal complaint, but a recognized and respectable point of view.

The papacy had, to be sure, gained prestige, attested indirectly in a striking way. On the whole the popes had been for a long time men who could personally command respect, and the office had become the unquestioned symbol of the unity of the Church and Christendom. But people were not blind to the way in which the Curia was exacting in matters of money and perquisites. To protect the sanctity of the Supreme Pontiff against this growing criticism something analogous to the later theory that "the King can do no wrong" shows its face. "Obey the Pope, but look out for the Cardinals"; "the Pope is above reproach, but his *entourage* give him a bad name"—so in effect suggest two satirists.[13]

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[11] *La Bible au Seigneur Berze,* Langlois, *La Vie en France au Moyen Age,* II, 101. *La Bible Guiet, ibid.,* II, 73.

[12] O weh meiner jungen Tage,
O weh meiner sehnenden Klage,
Dass man mich will in ein Kloster zwingen!
Da sehe ich nimmer me (mehr)
Laub, Grass, Blumen, grünen Klee,
Noch höre der kleinen Vogel singen.
Das ist meine Noth, mein Freude ist Tod,
Dass man mich will scheiden
Von den lieben Freundin mein.

A few words modernized. Test in Bühler, *Geistesleben im Mittelalter,* 178.

"When God instituted the Holy Church he gave it two good guardians: the clerics and the knights; clerics to teach the law, knights to defend it";[14] but these knights, instead of using their swords to protect the oppressed, employ them to exploit the oppressed.[15] These knights doubtless felt obliged to buy gloves and girdles, and feudal incomes were not very elastic affairs. But the oppressed were not likely to take all this into consideration. Here again an ideal strikes back. Religion had taken over the institution of chivalry, and it is asked to give an account of the knights into whose hands the Church had laid a sword.

In sum, life began to change. It was, as has been said, "as if mankind had begun to live at a faster tempo."[16] Maladjustments were brought about, and also the very possibility of change, as it became apparent, wrought discontent with what might formerly have been more patiently borne. And, in an atmosphere less serene, many people began to sigh for the past.

> . . . Molt est changiez
> Li siecles de tel com jel vi.[17]
>
> Il soloit estre uns tens jadis
> Que li siecles estoit jolis—.[18]
>
> On savait bien mieux vivre en ce
> temps-la qu'aujourd'hui.[19]
>
> Cosi riposato cosi bello
> Viver di cittadini e cosi fide
> Cittadinanza e cosi dolce ostello.[20]

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[13] *Le Bésant de Dieu,* Langlois, II, 123; "Carite," *ibid.,* II, 146.

[14] Robert de Blois, *L'Enseignement des Princes, La Chastoiement des Dames,* Langlois, II, 188.

[15] *La Livre des Manières, ibid.,* II, 13.

[16] Von Gleichen-Russwurm, *Die Gottische Welt,* 3.

[17] *La Bible Guiet.*

[18] *La Bible au Seigneur Berze.*

[19] *Flaminica.*

[20] Dante, *La Divina Comedia* (*Paradiso,* XV).

Man nennt gern, wen man lobt heute,
einen der alten fränkischen Leute,
die waren einfach, treu und wahr. . . .[21]

The mood seems common enough to us. We are often tempted even to take it for granted that the elderly always tend to see the world as rapidly going to the dogs, as in a time of rapid change they naturally very often do. But here was something far more widespread and significant. There came at times a gentle, pensive melancholy into the French sculpture; an idyllic mode into literature. Sometimes too there came mannered artificialities and pedantic allegories. That serenity, which now seems to have been almost but of a moment, had passed.

And, when it had passed, there was something else underneath the accelerating current of a life which seemed to bloom always more luxuriantly, increasing with the growing peacefulness and refinement of all the externals of living, to which the authoritative religious interpretation of Christianity adjusted itself—saints less aloof of feature, a *radiant* Gothic (*rayonnant*), the unopened *buds* of Romanesque art bursting into full bloom, not in heaven, but upon the moldings and pillar capitals of its edifices of worship. It has been called an "inner, spiritual hunger of vast multitudes of people."[22]

The Church, to be sure, had arranged to feed this hunger. It was for this that the *mass* had become central in the religious complex. Interpret it as one would, it was bound still to symbolize the desire of the inner man to be linked to and sustained by an ultimate and permanent source of spiritual refreshment and abiding hope. It had, however, obtained an interpretation accepted at an unfortunate moment, which was bound to become more and more authoritative, because there came to attach to it more and more clearly perceived advantages.

Way back in the ninth century, that darkest of all centuries, which we have called the Dark Ages, when the papacy was ruled by two intriguing women, when feudal society was most chaotic, a Benedictine abbot, Radbertus, had written a tract entitled, "Concerning the Body and Blood of the Lord."[23] Radbertus began, as all men then must have begun, by quoting authorities. The authorities were by no means all clear, of harmonious opinion, or suited to the conclusion to which he came; but this conclusion banished for a long time all doubt or uncertainty. In the sacrament of the eucharist, he says, the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ; the same body which was born of a Virgin, and hung upon a cross. Indeed, on certain particularly miraculous occasions, the elements had appeared upon the altar as flesh, in the form of a slaughtered lamb, or of a child, slain by the hand of an angel.

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[21] Hugo von Trimberg.

[22] Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion.*

Such a theory was just the sort wanted by the ninth century; it was simple and terribly concrete. It was so consistent with ritual ideas of sacrifice which had for centuries testified to some instinctive human idea that worshipers might, in a sacrificial feast, have transfused into them the efficacy of their god, that it perhaps could hardly have avoided being popular.

Incidentally a tremendous power was put into the hands of Christian priests. But such possibilities of exploitation never inspire practices; they are discovered and were discovered afterwards. *The Christ,* who had, from the time of Paul, died once upon the cross of Calvary for the sins of mankind, no longer was sacrificed once and for all upon Calvary; but every day, upon thousands of altars, he was sacrificed, and Christian priests performed the miracle which made this possible.

It would be a mistake to imagine that everyone continued to see the matter so barely and crudely as the theory of Radbertus allowed. Some, revolted by too palpable materialism, might lift the whole mystery into the realm of the metaphysical, and a clear, straight doctrine of *transubstantiation,* insisting upon the material change, was slow to forge its way to statement and acceptance. But, as the medieval period advanced, the question for the popular mind was, "What of those priests who purvey to us this sacrificial food?" We have seen this question behind the Albigensian Heresy. It troubled too the ecclesiastical powers, as we have also seen, in the reforms of the eleventh century; and we have also noted how Peter Damiani, upon grounds intended by him only to safeguard the sacrament spiritually, advanced the arguments which made it no longer necessary for the Church to accomplish the impossible task of procuring a one-hundred per cent worthy priesthood, in order to insure the faithful worshipers that the sacrament they received was not vitiated, should they be led to question the life or virtues of the officiating priest.

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[23] "De corpore et sanguine Domini," dedicated in 844 to the Emperor Charles the Bald.

This theory saved the power of the clergy, and thus in a large measure helped to secure the central power of the pope. It also satisfied a popular demand of worshipers who could not rest untroubled while they feared for their eternal salvation, because they might doubt as to the personal respectability of the priest who ministered it to them.

> Was der Priester auch begeht,
> die Messe reine doch besteht;
> die kann niemand schwachen
> noch besser machen:
> die Messe und der Sonnenschein
> die müssen immer reine sein.[24]

The mass, however, was but the central point of a very complicated machinery of symbol and instrumentality—a vast vocabulary of images, by means of which one mounted to the apex of his religious hopes. Long since, the more thoughtful Christians had rejected images as objects of worship or vehicles of magic, retaining the images, for purposes above suggested.[25] However, if one responded to these images with his emotions, he was always in danger of worshiping them, and if he treated them merely as signs, there was little in them, one or all, to warm the heart, or even, some might feel, to satisfy the ultimate aspirations of the intellect as a ladder. The emotional might complain, "You put so many things between me and God I cannot touch or feel him." The intellectual might urge, "Though it may be true that I may learn something of the nature of a man, noting the choice and arrangement of his furniture, there must be a closer and more intimate way of knowing him than that."

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[24] "No matter what the priest does, the mass remains none the less pure. This none can either weaken or make better. The mass and the sunshine, these two must always remain pure," poem of *Freidank,* a wandering singer of the third decade of the thirteenth century.

[25] The distinction between images used as objects of worship and as symbols is already expressed as early as the time of Charlemagne, in the *Caroline Books,* of his own inspiration.

This reaction, so roughly suggested, gave birth to a tradition called mysticism. Leaving for the moment all earlier appearances of this mood aside, it is expressed, directly with respect to images, in the broad symbolic use of them consistent with the thirteenth-century Scholasticism of the type of Aquinas, by a German mystic of the fourteenth century:

> Thus we see that natural knowledge consistent in the distinction of manifold things, that are neither good nor evil. But divine truth is a pure distinction of things everlasting, which man recognizes in himself without all images, that is, by an internal consciousness and feeling showing him what God and creatures are, time and eternity, sin and virtue, manifold and simple, useful and hurtful, evil and good. . . . For the man who has left creatures and turned himself to God, he findeth in himself, without all intervening images, the sweetness of God and the bitterness of creatures.[26]

This mood always required much watching by the organized Church, and particularly where it attempted to organize on its own part, as a metaphysical system. We have already mentioned the first of such systems to become important in the medieval period; that of John Scotus, or Erigena (the *Erin-born,* or Irishman) John Scotus had not only harmonized religion and reason; he had identified them, made them one and the same thing. God was, for him, "all in all" literally; and the cycle of universal being was God, in four modes, which are four *divisions of nature*:[27] 1. nature creating and not created; 2. nature created and creating; 3. nature created but not creating; 4. nature neither created nor creating. In less abstract language this meant that God, as the essence of all things, first created ideas, which in turn were creative of sensible realities, which sensible realities would ultimately be gathered together again unto God, who would then rest eternally, unchangeably, comprehensively, *All.*

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[26] *The Following of Christ,* ascribed to Tauler, quoted in English translation of J. R. Morell, 66.

[27] Thence the title of the work in which Scotus developed this conception, *De devisione Naturae.*

*Pantheism,* of course. The Church instinctively rejected pantheism, in whatever form it recognized this speculative tendency. With it the drama of salvation seemed to have no place in the scheme of things. More generally we may feel that it may be very well to reduce everything, with all inclusive differences, to *one* reality, and to call that one God; but the *differences between things,* or the clash of combating purposes, which we choose to snub in doing so, as ultimately nonexistent, are often so troubling and significant that we get but small comfort in refusing to recognize them as real.

Metaphysics troubles few people, however. Mysticism became far more dangerous when it descended to more concrete suggestion. In the twelfth century two men, who started from two different poles, agreed, whether or not by mutual influence, that the world's history was divided into three epochs, or eras, each one of which was dominated by *one* of the three *persons* of the Christian trinity.[28] The period of the Mosaic Law had been the epoch of the Father, with the Old Testament as its gospel. The second was the epoch of the Son, for which the New Testament was the somewhat different law and inspiration. To these was to follow a third epoch of the Holy Spirit, with an "Eternal Gospel" of personal mystic revelation and communion.

In this third epoch the sacraments would be discontinued, and "the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would suffice for the salvation of mankind, without any external ceremonial act whatsoever." [29] Seven sacraments, seven orders of the clergy, laid upon the shelf like so many outworn garments

Joachim of Flora apparently did not intend to wipe clean the slate of ecclesiastical institutions in this third epoch. A Benedictine himself, he placed the feeble beginnings of this age in the coming of the founder of his order, Benedict. To this element of his thought, which made the monastic ideal representative of this third period, Bernard of Clairvaux might have subscribed with some qualification—as he did indeed contribute to the devolopment of a type of mysticism destined to develop within cloisters, and to stray only occasionally beyond the borders of the established faith. Indeed, whatever might be its dangers, the Church could not let slip entirely from its grasp this potent force. Arrangements to keep it, however, concern us more significantly later on. What for the moment was most dangerous was the fact that heretics, in Aquitaine particularly, began to read "The Eternal Gospel"; strong medicine for their anticlerical prejudices.

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[28] These two persons were Amauri of Bene (or Chartres), a great student of Aristotle and Scotus; and Joachim of Flora, a Benedictine abbot. The doctrine appears to have become popular only through its later expression by one John of Parma.

[29] Rousselot, *Joachim de Flore, Jean de Parme, et la Doctrine de L'Évangile Éternel,* 47.

It was not, however, among the Latin peoples of Europe that speculative mysticism was to push most clearly, solidly, and deeply toward a point of view, which gave the basis for a type of popular piety that accepted, only as a compromise, any of the saving offices of the organized Church. It was among a people of different temperament, whose thought, with a certain sort of inwardness (*Innigkeit*) its racial own, clung to and molded itself into the rich complexities, and often cloudy vaguenesses of the Germanic tongue.

The Germans were long in a measure outsiders from the standpoint of the medieval world with which we have had most to do. "The Italians hated them, the French admitted their courage but detested their manners, the English were jealous of them."[80] The development of the papal power, through the eleventh and twelfth centuries, never met with such success here as in the rest of western Europe, although the religious prestige of the Pope, well established by the thirteenth century, won loyal devotion from pious Germans, which paid well when, through the fifteenth century particularly, the German burghers began to increase rapidly in wealth. But, so far as temporal supremacy was concerned, the Germanic peoples had their own *dream*. The emperor was, in

[80] Thompson, *Feudal Germany,* from an entire chapter on this subject, chap. xi.

their theory, inheritor of the entire ideal and realm of Charlemagne. This feeling helped to intensify a measure of independent development beyond the Rhine, among the characteristics of which were: less sharp distinction between classes, less dependence upon a hierarchy of noble persons, and more upon legally enforced justice for the assurance of social order and peace; more individualism in the middle classes. The German was, as he in many respects remains, a somewhat incongruous, but still sturdy mixture of brooding dreamer and hard-headed, sometimes ruthless realist in practical affairs. Less cerebral, at once more imaginative and more sensual than the Frenchman, he cared less to contemplate ideals than to move toward them in a mass, in which emotion and intellect were interfused. Slower to move from solid comfort to pursue a phantom than some people, once moved, none would chase it so whole-heartedly and far.

*Salvation* did not come naturally to the German as a mediated affair. Social order itself did not come to him, as to the feudal French, as mediated through a complicated hierarchy of nobles in various grades. For social justice he looked straight into the laws and customs of his enlarged clan, which code it was taken to be the business of the ruler to enforce, not as the ruler arbitrarily—nor in the exercise of patriarchal justice—willed, but because it was the law and custom of the people.[31] And when someone began to tell the German that he might look himself toward the face of God, seeking there directly his salvation, the idea appealed to him and moved him. So, when mysticism came to Germany, to spread there, it was less in treatises over which theologians might pore, or in fatherly talks to little groups of monks, then in popular sermons, that dared try the patience of ordinary congregations with doctrines of revolutionary import, and of deep metaphysical implication destined to link with important trends of thought in Germany's classic period of philosophy.

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[31] "Ce ne fut qu'à la fin du quinzieme [siècle] qu'ils parvinrent à faire passer le droit romain dans la pratique usuelle et réussierent à annuler les vieilles traditions germaniques et le droit national," Janssen, *L'Allemagne et la Réforme,* I, 459, chapter ii entire. Original in German.

We need not trace this movement step by step. To touch upon the leading conceptions of Meister Eckhart, its most distinguished exponent, will sufficiently give us a sense of the direction in which this new pregnant tendency pushed.

Eckhart was born some twenty-three years later than Thomas Aquinas. He belonged to the same religious order, the Dominicans, and rose to high preferment in that order before his ideas got him into trouble. He had preached far and wide in Germany with great success, and only as an old man was he summoned before the Inquisition at Cologne, where Thomas Aquinas had taught. From the judgment there passed against some of his doctrines he appealed to the pope, and died in 1329, before the Bull condemning twenty-seven of them was published.

Eckhart did not so much attack the sholastic position, framed in support of the doctrinal system of the Church, as reach around and behind it toward God, in a way which rendered the whole systematic vocabulary of image and symbol of clearly secondary importance. None the less, the more he developed his conception of a direct mystic approach, the more it became clear that, if his approach were legitimate, the institutional-doctrinal system was not so much an instrumentality of secondary importance as a direct hindrance, interposing artificial and false conditions.

Eckhart likens salvation to an *eternal birth.* He asks the question, whether this birth is served and furthered more by drawing into the understanding, from the imagination, a *picture* of God, defined in categories, wise, almighty, eternal, etc., or by withdrawing from all thoughts, words, and active gestures of speech; emptying oneself, and resting in a passive condition of waiting for God to come and fill this receptive vacancy.[32] His answer is unquestionably the latter. "In the depth of being there is no active striving." The soul extends itself toward the world by means of active forces that spring from it; but the inner ground and center of the soul is only *a deep silence,* and it is into this emptiness and rest that God the Father breathes his eternal Word.[33]

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[32] *Von der ewigen Geburt, Vier Predigen,* I. Ed. Büttner, *Meister Eckehart's Schriften und Predigten,* I, 33-34.

What then of the scholastic method? The implication of Eckhart's thought is that, following the method of Aquinas, the soul strives toward God in a very laborious way, sending out toward the world forces which frame images, orders and arranges these images in an elaborate hierarchy, and then, by means of this complicated ladder, remounts to the very place at which it started, no nearer than before, since it must first empty itself of all it has accumulated in the pursuit, before God can touch it. It was much as if one who stood before the door of his dwelling suddenly decided, not to enter directly, but first to encircle the outer walls, to then place himself again before the identical door, no nearer, not essentially better prepared to enter, than before.

And Eckhart's thought did not disturb merely the elaborate scholastic scaffolding of the doctrinal edifice of the Church. In the mystic experience of *birth,* as he describes it, the silent, passive, empty, and thus unified soul, if found of God, was to be found of a *Godhead,* itself stripped in somewhat similar manner of that trinitarian form in which outwardly it is revealed. The material creation he does not deny to be a revelation of God, nor that through it one may mount to a point where all form and image and symbol is stripped off, and God appears as free of matter. The trinitarian form he does not deny to be a revelation of God, but in ultimate blessedness the soul is in some cognitive way united with a Godhead which is *hidden behind* the Trinity of Christian doctrine.[34]

This was unquestionably heresy. For the salvation of man, the Trinity is ultimately set aside, one merely of those forms of revelation of which the soul must empty itself, before it might become receptive of God's inner, mystic revelation.

We need not follow Eckhart's speculation into its corners.

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[33] "Aber in dem Wesen giebt es keinelei Werk. Denn die Kräfte, vermittelst deren sie wirkt, die entspringen wohl aus dem Grunde der Seele, aber in dem Grunde selbst ist nur tiefe Schweigen. Hier nur ist Raum und Ruhe für jene Geburt, dafür dass Gott de Vater dort sein Wort spricht. . . . Je freier du von Bildern bist, um so empfänglicher bist du für sein Einwirkung."

[34] "Aber sie [the soul] kann noch seliger werden; wenn sie der blossen Gottheit nachgeht, von der die Dreifaltigkeit nur ein Offenbarung ist." (*Von den Hindermissen an wahren Geistlickeit,* ed. Büttner, II, 186.)

Whether or no his thought is pantheistic ultimately has been disputed. Ultimate blessedness though a sort of *unknowing* (*Unwissen*) is still a sort of *knowing,*[35] still possibly to be distinguished from the knowing of God. None the less this cognitive blessedness is taken to be a true union with God—and here we may leave Eckhart's ultimate mystic speculation hanging, to turn to what was for him the final intention of it all: its implication for ethics.

Practically, for Eckhart, the task of the Christian, in seeking this ultimate cognitive union with God, becomes an imitation of Christ. While in ultimate blessedness the soul is in some cognitive way united with the Godhead hidden behind the Trinity of Christian doctrine, practically the process of salvation is one of sanctification, a bringing to birth of the Son in man. The Son reveals God in a process, the substance of which Eckhart sums up as *poverty.* God departed from the simplicity of his being in taking on humanity, and returns to it in the process which strips humanity from the Son. And so human beings, the Son born in them, are to strip themselves of sensual desires and all sensible images. But the birth of the Son in the individual man is, for Eckhart, a birth for *life,* before it is a birth for blessedness. It is a birth for the active task of "putting on Christ," in Pauline phrase. The inner man is to conform the garment of the flesh to the seed of life within him. The task is no longer one of conforming the life with external discipline, with ritual, with asceticism, as a means of having some ultimate salvation conferred as a reward.

Here, out of a labyrinth of mystic speculation, we may note a new mood in Christian ethics. This mood, or emphasis, did not necessarily attach itself to speculation which might prove dangerous. Some two generations after Eckhart's death appeared a handbook of the Christian life, its authorship generally attributed to one Thomas à Kempis,[36] the title of which was *Of the Imitation*

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[35] *Dort sollen wir unwissend werden mit dem göttlichen Wissen,* ed. Büttner, I, 51.

[36] The authorship of this work is also ascribed to one Gerson, a chancellor of the University of Paris, and prominent in religious reform at the time of the Council of Constance.

*of Christ.* It is well to note the persistence of this accent, before turning back to the dawn of the thirteenth century, to one who left few words of his own to explain the mainsprings of his character and action, and who so much belonged to the future that we must pass a century beyond him, that we may better understand him.

This man is Francis of Assisi.

## XXXV

> There lived in the city of Assisi, in the confines of the Valley of Spoleto, a man named Francis who, from his birth, was badly brought up by parents given over to worldly vanities; and he himself, imitating their habits and manner of life, became even more frivolous and vainglorious than they.[1]

WITH these words begins the earliest of many biographies of Francis of Assisi, written apparently before the year 1229, or less than three years after his death.[2] Already he had been canonized as a saint, the imposing basilica, to-day the central point of interest in the little city of Assisi, had been begun, to which the following year his remains were to be removed for burial. In short, this earliest biography, following so close upon his death, deals already with a holy person; is a legend in the primary sense of the word—something *to be read* for the edification of the hearers. Let the reader who is sufficiently curious prefix to the quoted passage the words "once upon a time" to test whether or not it transports him into storyland.

None the less, if the dating 1229 may be trusted, twenty-two years only had elapsed since Francis had taken the definite step of "renouncing the world" and the way of life into which his parents had set his feet. The biographer was, as biographers go, very near his facts, had known the saint well. But Francis of Assisi was, even before his death, a recognized saint in the thought of many thousands. One needed, in his later years, but to half close his eyes to see the halo, and what critic has the acumen to trace the subtle transmutation of fact a dimly visioned halo works? So we, despite our best efforts of criticism, and also because we too must attempt to see him as he was seen by thousands, must

[1] Thomas of Celano, *Legenda Prima,* from Italian trans. by Professor F. Casolini.
[2] Cellucci, *Le Leggende Francescano nel secolo XIII, etc.,* 38f.

from time to time, if not most often, half close our eyes in contemplating his picturesque and lovable personality. Passing time conspires to preserve his vesture of romance. From the grandiose and rather vulgar basilica built around the little cell of the *Porziuncula* one mounts at once toward the city of Assisi and the Middle Ages. The same sun, across the same flat fertile valley, penetrates for the most part the same small windows, to cheer the same cold chambers, and when it sinks behind the hills far across the valley, it leaves the same crooked narrow streets shadowy and chill. Bare sandaled feet of figures with brown cowls and bearded faces strike sound from a pavement smoother now, but the walls from which the sound reëchoes either side—many of them certainly—whispered long ago a scarcely audible echo when Francis' unshod feet came padding by. Francis of Assisi never was quite real, certainly not from that moment when he stripped himself naked, and handed his clothing in a bundle to his irate father. With the completeness which this action symbolized he was living out a vision from thenceforth. His mouth did not speak prophecies; he simply passed through the streets of Assisi, many places, a man emptied of every other thing that he might love his fellow creatures.

Praise to you, my Lord, and to all your creatures,
First, for our brother Master Sun,
Who makes the day, and who lights it for us,
Who is graciously shining,
And with splendor bears witness of you from the sky.

And praised be my Lord for Sister Moon,
And for the Stars, because they are brilliant
And precious and fair.

Praised be my Lord for Brother Wind,
For Air and for Cloud,
For Weather, gentle or otherwise
Through whom your creatures are nourished.

Praised be my Lord for Sister Water,
Who is useful and humble, cherished and chaste.

Praised be my Lord for Brother Fire
Who helps us to see in the night,
Who is fine and merry, hearty and strong.

Praised be my Lord for Mother Earth,
Because she nurses and rules us,
Bearing her varied fruits,
Her flowers of many hues, and her kindly herbs.[8]

Religious life flowed on. In each country there were currents more or less independent, disturbed by passing difficulties, undulate with adaptation, serving institutional interests differing here and there, feeding popular needs which might subtly change from generation to generation. In our sketchy brevity we cannot follow each separate regional current, but are obliged to pass abruptly from country to country, as in one corner or another forces arise, to grow until the broad general stream of European religious life is affected by them.

Italy, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was not France. The broad lines of papal policy, clearly enunciated by Gregory VII, were less obscured by more temporary pressing problems of papal politics proportionately as one got farther from Rome. In Rome the situation continued troubled all through the twelfth century. The century saw some eighteen popes and ten antipopes with claims of varying substantiality. The struggle with the emperor reached its climax, as did also that between the popes and the Roman commune. Another enemy to papal temporal claims arose, the Norman kingdom in the south of Italy. Seeking refuge and assistance in its difficulties, the papacy played a complicated political game with the Eastern Church and the Eastern Empire of Constantinople. Also, under similar pressure of practical exigency, it encouraged the aspirations of various Italian cities, in revolt against the emperor, giving fuel to the party strife of Guelphs and Ghibellines. On several occasions popes were forced to take refuge in the more orderly France.

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[8] Altissimu omnipotente bon Signore, Tue so le laude, la gloria e l'onore, et omne benedictione.
A te solo, altissimo se konfano, et nulle home e ne dignu te mentovare.
Laudato sie mi Signore, cum tucte le tue creature,
Specialmente messer le frate Sole, le quale iorna et allumini noi per loi.
Et ellu é bellu, e radiante, cum grande splendore, de te altissimo porta significatione.
Laudato si mi Signore per sora Luna, e le stelle, in celu l'ai formate clarite et pretiese et belle.
Laudato si mi Signore per frate vento, et per aere, et nubilo, et sereno et omne tempo per le quale a tue creature dai sustentamento.
Laudato si mi Signore per sor aqua, la quale é multo utile et humile, et pretiosa et casta.
Laudato si mi Signore per frate focu, per lo quale en allumini la nocte, et elle é belle et iocundo et robusto e forte.
Laudato si mi Signore per nostra matre terra, la quale ne sustenta et governa, et produce diversi fructi con coloriti fiori et herba.

Despite difficulties which bother even learned editors of the text none would wish to substitute a translation for the naïve warmth and richness of Francis' own words. The text is transcribed after Sodoni, *I Fioretti di San Francesco.*

Heresy was for long as bold in parts of Italy as it was for a shorter time in Aquitaine, before the Albigensian Crusade.[4] There were not only the *Cathari,* that heresy prevalent in the southwest of France; but the Vaudois, originating in Lyons, spread to the confines of Lombardy;[5] and Italy had its own particular heresy, which from 1260 spread abroad from a center in Parma.[6]

Like the political atmosphere, the intellectual atmosphere of Italy was less orderly than that of France. Italy was nearer to the old pagan traditions, also nearer geographically and in political and economic interest to the Byzantine East. Further, Italy was susceptible to Moslem influence. Reasonableness and order played everywhere a smaller rôle. Passion, of hatred or of love, was less sublimated by intellect and taste. Life was more colorful, more desperate and intense. Bitter commercial rivalries between neighboring cities, where close oligarchies of merchant-bankers were coming to rule, caused covetousness and jealousy, the poison of which is upon some of the barbed phrases of Dante's *Divine Comedy.* "Perugia and Assisi turn the Umbrian plain into a wilderness of wolves by their recurrent warfare,"[7] from their two hills in sight of each other. As a result of this acrimonious strife Francis himself spends a year as prisoner of war in the rival city of Perugia.

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[4] See Gebhart, *L'Italie Mystique,* 31, or first two chapters entire.

[5] Bernard Gui, *De Modo, Arte et Ingenio Inquerendi et Examinandi et Examinandi Hereticos, etc.,* II, 2, in ed. *Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Age* (1322-1324).

[6] *Ibid.,* III, 1.

[7] J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy,* I, 29.

Into this troubled world Francis was born well placed. In a civilization of commerce triumphant, his father was among the richer merchants of Assisi. Like many another rich merchant with a promising son, Bernardone, who well knew what consequence money might purchase, lined generously the pockets of his heir. Francis was a leader, gay, imaginative, prodigal. He appears to have had a special liking for conspicuous clothing, having made for himself garments richer than were appropriate to his station, in which he might aim at bizarre effects, such as that of having sewn together in a single garment costly materials with stuffs of the meanest quality.[8] He was an object of admiration to everybody, says his first biographer, straining to surpass them all in games, in elegant refinements, clever conversation, in songs, in munificent ostentation. He was, none the less, prudent in trade, affable and courteous, even where he gained no advantage in being so.[9]

We need not take too seriously Thomas of Celano's reflection that Francis was "badly brought up." Poor Thomas was after all a friar, and Bernardone quite clearly knew the life for which he prepared his son. Were one to condemn all opulent hard-working fathers, who amass money for gay, brilliant, and ambitious sons to spend, what would be left of satisfaction for such fathers? This son was on the rise, accumulating relationships above the station into which he had been born, and there might be pleasure to a *bourgeois* spirit in reflection that the paternal purse, without undue stretching, could foot resulting bills.

We are told that, while a prisoner in Perugia, Francis, in contrast to the others, laughed at his chains and cheered the others with his gayety.[10] But troubled moments were soon to follow. Imprisonment undermined his health, and it was followed by a long illness, during which he was obliged to think of other things, and in a different temper, than his habit.[11] A convalescent he set out one day from the city gates, paused leaning upon his staff to look out over the olive and vine-clad hillside, the rich level valley below, the gentle outline of the opposite hills. All this beauty now gave him no pleasure.[12] The good Thomas adds that now he began to value less the things which before he had admired and loved, but this *Weltschmerz* did not as yet turn him toward saintly aspiration, but rather he seems soon to have dreamed of further military adventure, which would take him into a new country. He planned to get himself knighted, and then to go with a companion of noble birth to the south of Italy, to help fight there the pope's battles against the Normans. For this expedition he fitted himself out with a rich wardrobe and equipment. Then one day, he met a noble youth who was poor, and by no means caparisoned appropriately to his station. Immediately Francis stripped off his elegant cloak and tunic that he might present them to one better born than he. None the less, and further spurred on by a dream, he persevered in his military intention, even set forth, but was apparently turned back by a fit of illness, which overtook him before he had reached the next city.[13]

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[8] *La Légende des Trois Campagnons,* chap. i. Though not of very early biography, this tradition has a genuine sound.

[9] Celano, *Legende Prime,* I, 1, i.

[10] Celano, *Legende Seconde,* 1, i.

[11] *Legende Prime,* 1, i.

This illness appears to have caused him to give up further thought of the contemplated campaign. Also he ceased to have unruffled pleasure with his former companions, was troubled by dreams, overtaken at times by disgust with his gay life. In the midst of all this he was still a business man, entrusted by his father with important merchandizing. In such capacity he set off for Foligno, his horse laden with fine scarlet woolen cloth. He bargained well, found even an excellent opportunity to sell his horse, and returned afoot with bulging purse. Brother Thomas can finish the tale for us.

> By the roadside, near Assisi, there stood a church, built long before in honor of St. Damian, and at this time menaced with immediate ruin.[14] As he approached, the new soldier of Christ, moved to pity at its

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[12] *Ibid.,* same section.

[13] Celano obscures the fit of illness, telling of a dream. The *Legend of the Three Companions* tells of the dream, but also of the illness (chap. ii).

[14] Foligno is about three hours afoot from Assisi. The little church of St. Damian still stands, the cloister inhabited now by a small community of friars, and keeping more than any relic of St. Francis in the environs of Assisi, a simple unspoiled souvenir of the picturesque saint.

> delapidation, entered with piety and reverence, and finding within a poor priest, he kissed the sacred hand with fervent faith, gave him all the money that he had, and declared to him an intention he had formulated. The priest, stupified by the incredible unexpectedness of his conversion, could not believe his senses, and fearing that he was being mocked, refused to take the money. Had he not seen Francis, in fact one might say the day before, living licentiously with companions and friends all of whom he outdid in frivolity? But the youth insistently attempted to convince him of the sincerity of his words, entreating and supplicating him that he might be allowed to live with him, for the love of God.
>
> Finally the priest consented to his request to remain with him, but for fear of Francis' parents he was unwilling to accept the money, which the true spurner of riches then threw out of the window, counting it as so much dust.[15]

Sabatier, in his charming *Life of St. Francis,* assumes that, after he had been instructed in a vision to rebuild the little church, Francis went home, gathered together all his possessions that he found there, took this little property of woven stuff, and his horse, to Foligno for sale.[16] Need we, however, be timorous of accepting the possibility that, returning from a commercial enterprise undertaken on his father's behalf, already immersed in the struggle which was soon to lead him to complete renunciation of his old life, when he stopped at the little church, Francis gave way to one of his sudden prodigal impulses which, had it resulted in a carouse with his old friends, would perhaps have gained no grave rebuke from his indulgent parent? Was it not always his father's money that he spent; and was there, in his wishing to pile the contents of his purse into the hands of the poor priest of St. Damian's, in a gesture of conversion, reason for shocked disapproval, merely because his father later angrily resented such expenditure? It is too much to ask of Francis at one time picturesque and unmeasured renunciation of money, and at another a constant unshaken attention to all the scrupulosities by which the property-loving protect and sanctify it. It is not incumbent upon us to consider this act of his as a rule of general action, or of his persisting principle or practice; but even to saints one must allow the faults of their qualities. Those who cannot conceive of Francis as having in this unthinking way disposed of the property of his father, are not perhaps, because of the vagueness of our information, obliged to do so. To others, in such a moment of crisis, it may quite equally seem consistent with many acts of his.

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[15] This incident is far from clear. Later accounts seem further to obscure it. The *Second Legend* of Celano tells merely of a vision in which he is commanded to "repair my house, which you see all in ruins," and of how he gave money to the priest to purchase oil for the altar lamps; which story is again in the *Legend of the Three Companions.*

[16] *Vie de St. François,* chap. iv.

Though the chronology of his conversion period is by no means clear, this action may symbolize its crisis. A breach was opened, which ere long resulted in a further not less picturesquely unmeasured action in which, when his father attempted to return him forcibly to his old life, Francis, now under the protection of Assisi's bishop, stripped himself naked of his clothing, which he handed in a bundle to his irate parent, while the good bishop protected his nakedness with a corner of his own cloak.[17]

We cannot stop to recount all the incidents, legendary or actual, of this conversion period; nor of the period of the order's early growth. The saint's first experience in kissing the hand of a leper; the day in Rome when he borrowed a beggar's robe, spent the day asking alms, to rechange his clothing at the day's end and depart for home: his first experience with poverty—such stories have been often retold. More consistent with our purpose is the attempt to make a brief estimate of his character, of his personal conception of his order's purpose, and of his personal influence and that of his order.

Francis of Assisi is by no means the only personality in Christian history who attempted to live out in an uncompromising way a personal ideal of Christianity. He is perhaps unique for the poetic completeness with which his ideal expressed itself in action. He does not merely teach unbounded love of all creatures; he preaches to the birds, kisses the hand of a leper, begs pardon of his body for having roughly used it in his asceticisms. He is impelled to garb every conception of his in an action, in which he can get the idea's complete emotional feel. Least perhaps of all prominent Christian saints is he an intellectual. With him the intellect is not renounced from mistrust of mankind's intellectual tools, as leading to doubts, distractions, the satisfying of curiosity which splintered the integrity of a religious vision. Other saints have often been contemptuous or mistrustful of profane or curious speculations, not seldom because at one time or another such pursuits have tempted them. Francis rather sets all this aside as immaterial. It was never his way to stand ruminant beside any contemplative stream, but rather to plunge in, and to learn immediately just how wet the water was. When he began to brood upon the sufferings of Jesus, the "stigmata" were symbolic of an essential of his nature; he had to have the wounds, in his hands, his feet, his side. He must know something of how it had *felt* for Jesus to suffer on the cross.[18]

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[17] Giotto, in his frescoes in the upper church at Assisi, chooses three scenes from the conversion period: the first vision, when he contemplated military adventure; the vision at St. Damian's, where he is commanded, "Rebuild my Church"; the act of renunciation in which he strips himself of his clothing.

As a result of this, some of the picturesqueness of Francis' actions is superimposed. Situations in which Jesus found himself, whatever symbolic significance reflection might discover in them, still grew naturally and in what seems an inevitable way, out of the interaction of his nature and other personalities or social forces outside. Francis repeatedly set the scenes, not from self-conscious ostentation, but rather, it would seem, because his imagination formed patterns of action which, with dramatic intensity, he immediately set about realizing.

The inspiration of these patterns of action is easy to discover. It was, of course, his conception of his life as an imitation of Jesus, which imitation is not altogether well rounded. It seems everywhere conditioned by what came to be the deepest emotional incentive of his nature: the discovery, repeatedly reënforced, that for him there was no joy comparable to that which arose from the sense of being one, through love and lively sympathy, with his fellow creatures.

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[18] The whole disputed subject of the *stigmata* need not concern us here. It is worthy of note that he seems to have inspired a great number of so stigmatized persons since his time, and perhaps particularly significant that his should have been the first of so many examples.

Francis' ideal of voluntary poverty, which became central in his life, and which he intended as the foundation stone of his order, sprang from such an imitation of Jesus, conditioned by the emotional experiences above emphasized. It too was an imitative pattern of action dramatized. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heavens nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head," Jesus says.[19] But the very wording of this phrase, and its contexts, show no such dramatic embracement of poverty as that of Francis. Indeed, only when one thinks of Jesus as divinely able to have anything he might have wanted, in some miraculous way, does his career become one of *embracing poverty.* A saying such as the one quoted can hardly take one farther than to imply that Jesus accepted poverty as an inevitable accompaniment of his mission; to which the "three temptations" add their weight, as implying all of them a definite choice, which rejected, not poverty itself, but the means by which it might doubtless have been avoided. Viewing the career of Jesus as a whole, one may scarcely go farther, without psychological interpretation, than to hold the poverty of Jesus a consequence of the fact that society does not allow men who feel, think, and talk as he did to be anything else than poor.

Still one may go a step farther, and in the direction of Francis, believing that Jesus doubtless found poverty a consistent constructive element of his mission, as removing considerations and barriers which would inevitably hamper it. So may we consider the acceptance of poverty upon the part of Jesus as positive as well as negative; as not only inevitable if his message and mission were not to be compromised, but also useful to it.

Francis, however, goes farther than this. He embraced poverty, embraced it dramatically, and dramatized its conditions. It was personified by him as "The Lady Poverty," the mistress whom he served in his own knightly fashion. But this drama did not feed only upon itself. There can be little doubt, as we follow his picturesque actions in her service, that the reiterated experiences of joy in the love of his fellow creatures, to which his poverty gave full rein and more universal sympathy, kept alive a constant warmth in this embracement of his *bride;* and that, though he embraced poverty desiring to be an imitator of Christ, there flowed from this renunciation a continual joy in the love of his fellow creatures, to which it opened him more broadly.

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[19] Matthew VIII. 20; Luke IX. 58. The contexts are not the same, nor do the words fall into the same part of his ministry in the two citations. Luke, however, connects it with the sending off of the apostles to teach, a passage much in the mind of Francis.

This positive result for him of the *rule of poverty* must be kept in mind, if we are to understand later difficulties of his order in following his ideal. For many of his later followers, who did not exploit it, poverty was often at best but a sort of penance undertaken to obtain a later reward in another life, and as such was to lose just the spontaneous and saving quality it had with him. Also, with organization, many practical difficulties inevitably arose.

In an age which, while it undertakes more broadly than any preceding to abolish poverty, also hardly despises and perhaps hardly fears any other thing, the poverty of Francis deserves some particular attention.

The age of Francis did not despise poverty, and had no great reason to fear it; although the emphasis of Francis of Assisi is particularly significant because of the fact that this attitude was almost immediately to decline. Christianity was obliged by its gospel to keep in mind the poor. The Middle Ages strove to keep alive an attitude of primitive Christian charity, in various customs. The poor had a recognized right to the hospitality of the table of a great lord. To be sure they often were obliged to comfort themselves with the remainders of the feast after the others had finishd, but even this was looked upon as a lapse from the recognized custom. The tale of King Oswald presents the medieval ideal. King Oswald, returning from a pilgrimage, makes feast in his castle hall. During the feast the pages drive a poor pilgrim from the table, which, when the King remarks what they have done, is expiated by his inviting the poor stranger to a seat of honor, beside the fireplace. Louis IX of France (St. Louis), rebukes the Sieur de Joinville, because he does not observe the custom of washing the feet of the poor on the Thursday of Holy Week, a custom which the king himself never failed to observe.[20]

This, to be sure, represents only the picturesque and ideal aspect of the attitude; but underneath it there had been a change from pagan times, when the poor were either slaves or *proletariat.* For the Middle Ages poverty was no longer a stigma, but a status. Even the serf was in this raised above slavery, that he had, quite as truly as his lord, recognized rights. None dreamed of abolishing poverty; everyone was expected, in theory at least, to respect it. It was not looked upon as a sign of comparative social or economic unfitness, but a condition into which it pleased God that some be born. Not only did monasticism always aim at poverty as an ideal, but the knightly oath commanded particular kindness to the poor.

But not only had poverty less reason to be shunned as a sign of incompetence, and thus a butt of social scorn. It also had far less reason to be feared because of any too great physical suffering or even discomfort, comparatively speaking. In the time of Francis but few people lived far above the level of satisfying elementary physical needs, and few knew economic security far beyond the compass of some day or a couple of seasons. Few men at least, of whatever station, did not know what it was to sleep upon a bundle of straw spread upon the floor, in a haymow, or underneath the stars. Even in all but the best of inns, guests were likely any time to overflow into a barn or hayloft. Economic pressure, such as we know it to-day, hardly existed; and when troublesome times came, because of war or famine, they bore more or less upon everybody. Embracing poverty, one renounced the not yet very refined luxury of the time—gorging feasts and splendid raiment almost more than anything else. Indeed the most costly luxury of the rich was that of maintaining a large train of dependents.

It is worth our contemplation, this medieval poverty, if for nothing else, to remind us that, in the vast increase of material wealth, both the social and the relative material situation of the poor is vastly worse to-day. Indeed poverty, as Francis embraced it, brought with it a considerable measure of increased social freedom. For the purchase of freedom by renunciation of material comfort our civilization has hardly left a place. The pressure of material circumstances and commercial machinery bears more and more heavily, decade after decade, upon all sorts of ideal endeavor. Indeed it seems as if society, along with its attempt to banish poverty, has banished at the same time any decent or even humanly tolerable possibility, even of embracing poverty, in something the spirit of Francis, to gain freedom for the exercise of a spontaneous, self-neglecting, and loving service of mankind.[21]

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[20] "Il me demanda si je lavoie les piez aus povres le jour dou grant jeudi: "Sire, dis-je, en maleur! les piez de ces vilains ne laverai-je jà.—Vraement, fist-il, ce fu mal dit; car vous ne devez mie avoir en desaing ce que Dieu fist pour notre enseignement. Si vous pri-je, pour l'amour de Dieu premier, et pour l'amour de moy, que vous les acoustumez à laver," *Histoire de Saint Louis,* sec. iv.

Passing from the ideal of poverty, we may note that the essential romanticism of Francis' character, inconsistent at bottom with organization, persisted as the order began to grow. Doubtless his whole nature resisted the inevitable organization of a movement of rapidly increasing numbers; and when problems of cohesion and organization arose, he became interested rather in long journeys, and in plans to convert Mohammedan infidels in Egypt. Returning from one of his journeys, he found himself confronted with a situation which seemed to him an entering wedge of controversy involving his principle of poverty. He met this situation in his usual dramatic manner. The citizens of Assisi had raised money, and had built, upon the outskirts of the city at the *Portiuncula,* where Francis and his first companions had begun their community life, a building to house the continually growing number of friars who met there for the *General Chapters,* or conventions of the entire order. When Francis saw what they had done, calling a few most faithful followers, he began to destroy the structure with his own hands, continuing until reminded by the city authorities that the building was the property of the city.[22]

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[21] It scarcely fits with the purpose of this sketch to burden the text with complete explanation of the author's meaning here. The few words will suffice to suggest that all types of ideal endeavor to-day, whether of art, theoretical truth-seeking, or religious care and teaching, are obliged, in general at least, either to meet some sort of commercial requirements, fall in with the popular current and angle for applause, or live upon a bounty which is keenly aware of its economic interests, and what may further or menace them.

The controversy here threatened was however to grow, and when it impended Francis gained permission from the Cardinal Protector of the order to depart for Egypt, as he long had wished to do. From this moment he lost control of the community, of which he resigned the government soon after his return, six years before his death.

During these six years the life of Francis is, in a considerable measure, separate from the fortunes of the order. He spent long periods in various pilgrimages; between periods of such retirement he preached in various places. His health became more and more fragile. In one period of convalescence (1224), in the little garden of St. Damian's, by that time a convent of women organized under Franciscan Rule,[23] he wrote the hymn in praise of all creation, which has been quoted above. The preceding month, refuged for solitary prayer and contemplation among the mountain wilds, he is supposed to have received the "stigmata." His eyesight began to fail; the next autumn an operation was performed. Meanwhile, oppressed with fear for the future of his community, he struggled to stabilize his ideal by the formulation of a written *rule,* which finally, in 1224, had been worked into form acceptable to the pope.

One of the last projects of Francis is still altogether of his gentle romanticizing fashion. When, during the last year of his life, "for the space of more than sixty days he had not been able to see the light of day, or even the flicker of a fire," he planned to send a few friars "throughout the world, preaching and singing" hymns of praise he had written, "as minstrels of God." Having finished their little service they were to say to the listeners, "We are minstrels of God, who ask of you a recompense for what we have sung, which recompense shall be your sincere repentance." [24] He added reflectively, "Who are servants of God, if it be not such minstrels as these, who should exalt the hearts of men, and move them to spiritual joy?" These words might indeed serve as the text of Francis' life.

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[22] This story is told in the *Mirror of Perfection,* which Sabatier erroneously believed to be the oldest document of the Franciscan movement.

[23] This community, first founded as that of the "Poor Women," came to be known generally as the "Clarissas," from its founder, St. Clara. The story of the attachment of Francis and Clara, the latter an aristocratic woman of Assisi, is one of the well-known romantic incidents of his career.

[24] *Speculum Perfectionis,* sec. 100.

By September of the year 1226 his condition was hopeless. Francis insisted that his physician tell him the truth. "According to our medical science your malady is incurable," was the verdict. The physician gave him still some few weeks to live. *"Bene veniat sora mea mors,"* "Welcome Sister Death," was his response,[25] and at the beginning of the next month the physician's prediction was made good.

In considering Francis of Assisi's ideal for his community, it must be remembered that the monastic tradition was in most respects fixed before his time. The first chapter of his Rule requires the friars to live, "In obedience, without private property, and in chastity." Of this nothing was new, save Francis' wish, soon defeated, to see the order itself, in its corporate capacity, without property; poverty never before having pretended to extend to the corporate community, but to be merely a personal renunciation of private property upon the part of the individual members. Up to the time of Francis' departure for Egypt, the communities inhabited osier huts, the chinks plugged with mud; or thatched cottages such as poor folk lived in. The first bone of contention upon his return was a more pretentious conventicle, which had been built at Bologna. Francis refused to enter it, and took shelter with the Dominicans. This controversy was later compromised by the declaration that this monastery was the property, not of the Minorites, but of the papal see. The final position of Francis himself is doubtless expressed in a paragraph of his *Testament,* or final charge to the order before his death:

> Let the Brothers take extreme care not to accept any churches, habitations, or other structures built for them, unless they be conformed to that sacred poverty they have sworn according to the Rule to observe. . . .[26]

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[25] *Ibid.,* 122.

[26] "Caveant sibi Fratres, ut ecclesias, et habiticula, et omnia alia, quae pro ipsis construuntur, penitus non recipiant, nisi essent decet sanctam paupertatem, quam in Regula promisimus observare."

Public preaching and missionary activity was a second characteristic of the purpose of Francis for his order; one shared with his contemporary founder of the Dominican order (Order of Friars Preachers, officially). The two orders differed in this that, while Dominic encouraged learning and theological study, Francis decidedly discouraged it, feeling it might be an entering wedge to intellectual pride for a brother even to possess a breviary, and advising those who did not know how to read not to learn.[27] Dominic, during his lifetime, centered the activity of his order in three foci of intellectual influence: Rome, Paris, and Bologna. Francis advised his followers to content themselves with little abandoned churches,[28] and with preaching short sermons, dealing simply with vices and virtues, punishments and rewards.[29]

Consistent with his admonition to poverty, and to simple preaching, was his emphatic desire that his followers shun controversy, entanglement with ecclesiastical wirepulling, and the temptations of ecclesiastical power.[30]

The underlying purpose of his Rule was clearly, although his first draft of a rule is lost, an attempt to reproduce the atmosphere and manner of life which he took to have been that of Jesus and his immediate disciples in Galilee. "He wrote for himself and his brothers a rule of life, in simple words, taking the gospel observance as its inviolable foundation," wrote Bonaventura.[31] Even more specifically Celano says that he employed expressions from the Gospels themselves, adding merely prescriptions required for the regulation of their common life.[32] "The Highest himself," Francis wrote, "revealed to me that I should live after the manner of the Gospel."[33]

This attempt split into two different parts. One of these was an attempt to inculcate a particular disposition, which leaves consistent traces in the later Rule made definitive for the order by Honorius III. For example, although the friars themselves were to be clothed simply and poorly, they are warned and exhorted not to condemn those more splendidly dressed.[34] Despite their habit of fasting, wherever they entered as guests they were to eat whatever was set before them.[35] They were not to be irritated or disquieted by the sins of a brother, since anger and a disturbed mind impeded love, both in themselves and in others.[36] Such a disposition was above and aside from a codified rule of life, and Francis himself never hesitated to depart from an accustomed ascetic practice if it were to help or encourage another.

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[27] *Rule,* chaps. iii, x. [28] *Testament.* [29] *Rule,* chap. ix.

[30] Francis is very emphatic here. In spite of papal license to preach, friars were not to preach in a church against the wish of the priest (*Testament,* and *Rule,* IX). Again, as to wire-pulling, for any purpose, ". . . non audeant petere aliquam litteram in curia romana per se, nec per interpositam personam, neque pro ecclesia . . . neque sub specie praedicationis, neque pro persecutione suorum corporum" (*Testament*). As to seeking preferment, "Minores ideo vocati sunt fratres mei, ut majores fieri non praesumant" (*Speculum Perfectionis*).

[31] Bonaventura, *Legende Major,* chap. iii.

[32] I Celano, i, 13. [33] *Rule,* chap. ii.

On the other hand, he grouped about his ideal of poverty other specific injunctions of Jesus, which enunciated originally had direct bearing upon a wandering missionary life, such as his and that of his disciples; and which was colored also by the contemporary Jewish belief that, at the Messiah's coming, existent society was to be essentially altered, if not utterly swept away. Here Francis' ideal encountered inevitable difficulties, when required to meet the situation of an organized body of men or women, attempting to live in the midst of a society of persisting settled pattern, to which some adaptation was indispensable.

The former element of Francis' ideal, that of disposition rather than formulated injunction, which was to be of broader popular influence, as testified to in the legendary dream of the pope, Innocent III, whose slumber was troubled by a vision of Francis supporting a falling church.[37] On this side the popular mind was unquestionably touched by the unbounded and tender love of Francis for his fellow men, and all fellow creatures. Nothing more clearly shows this than the legends rapidly growing up, which portray his gentle converse with animals of different sorts. Of these one of the most bizarrely picturesque is recounted by Bonaventura.

> At St. Mary of the Little Portion (*Portiuncula*) there was in a fig tree near the cell of the servant of God (Francis) a locust singing. The saint,

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[34] *Rule,* chap. iii. [35] *Rule,* chap. iii. [36] *Rule,* chap. vii.

[37] This dream is the subject of one of Giotto's frescoes at Assisi.

> accustomed to wonder at the greatness of the Creator, demonstrated in the smallest matters, found himself moved by these songs to more frequent praise of God. So the locust, when one day he called him, as if divinely inspired to do so, came and perched upon his hand, and Francis said to her, "Sister Locust, let us hear you sing and praise God in your joyous tones." Immediately the locust began to sing, and did not stop until the saint commanded it to return where it had been. So the locust remained for a week, going and coming at the will of Francis, and letting him hear her songs. Finally he said to his companions, "It is time we give our sister the locust permission to depart; she has enough entertained us with her songs. For a week she has incited us to our praise of the Lord." So he gave her leave, and, quite as though she feared to transgress the saint's command, she was not seen again.[38]

Francis came to be, not for his followers alone but the public generally, almost a reincarnation of Jesus. A prophecy of the Book of Revelations had forseen his coming;[39] he changed water into wine.[40]

> In all the actions of his life he was conformed to Christ, so that, just as Christ at the beginning of his preaching chose twelve apostles . . . so Saint Francis, when first he founded the Order, chose twelve companions, etc.[41]

That the words, disposition, and example of his early followers struck people as strange and unheard of, revolutionary, is shown by their early reception. When first sent broadcast as missionaries, his followers were regarded as heretics in Germany and Austria; in France they were taken for Albigenses; in Spain five suffered martyrdom. On the first appearance of Francis before the Pope, in an attempt to regularize his community, the tradition is that one cardinal only was not suspicious as to the effect of this new influence. The pope himself (Innocent III) played a waiting game, neither rejecting nor granting the request. But the popular appeal of the movement grew. Wandering in pairs about the country, clothed as peasants,[42] working in the fields or at itinerant jobs for

[38] *Legende Major,* chap. viii.

[39] *Ibid.,* Prologue.

[40] *Ibid.,* chap. v.

[41] *Fioretti,* chap. i.

[42] It is a mistake to think of the early garb of the friars as a uniform. It was rather the simplest sort of ordinary clothing of the poor.

board and lodging, mingling with the poor, the outcast, and the lepers, eating like ordinary Christians whatever was set before them, these "Little Brothers" were not like monks at all. And the early influence of the Franciscan movement cannot be measured by the history of that part of it soon transformed into a monastic community. When this organization came about it was necessary to provide for a large number of persons of settled family life, who desired to imitate Francis, without dissolving family ties or quitting usual occupations. The foundation of the "Third Order" (*Tertiaries*) of Francis marks perhaps even the most important portion of Franciscan influence. A gospel preached more in action than word, the following of which necessitated no cloister life, touched many many thousands.

We need not follow the fortunes of the movement, split by schism at the beginning of the fourteenth century; on one wing zealots for strict observance, some to develop strange fanaticisms, others to go after a movement soon declared heretical and suffer persecution; on the other those soon accused of begging abroad while rolling in ease in their conventicles; in the center a solid body of monks, assimilated generally to the common monastic tradition, rapidly gaining intellectual ambitions and prestige, under the rule of an efficient general, himself one of the intellectual powers of his time (Bonaventura).

What cannot be overlooked is the profound influence of the movement upon the psychological atmosphere of Europe, the part it played in the shift of emphasis from thought to feeling, from dialectic to psychology. As it touched the scholastic synthesis, this influence became a factor in the dissolution of the medieval intellectual order, which we will later follow. But nearer to the hearts of the people was its influence as strikingly evidenced in the history of religious art. Taking, for example, a Sienese crucifix of the year 1200, we shall find a cross in front of which stands a man, his arms extended along the arms of the cross. He does not suffer, he does not hang upon the cross. Look fifty years later, and you will see a suffering figure, a face contorted with pain, head hanging, blood flowing from pierced hands and feet, and from a wounded side.[43]

Historians of art are now generally agreed that the entrance of the pathetic into medieval European art derives above everything from the Franciscan influence. By the beginning of the fourteenth century French art had been similarly affected. Speaking of a portal of the Cathedral of Rouen, one of these historians of art says:

> It was carved about 1300. . . . The two lower registers contain nothing not already familiar. . . . But raise your eyes and study the Crucifixion . . . here nearly everything is new. The Crucifixion of the thirteenth century . . . is neither moving nor picturesque; it is as grave as a dogma. . . . [Here] personages abound—personages we have never before encountered upon Calvary. At the left of Christ, who has just breathed his last, the Jews are gathered together; among them the Centurion raises his hands to bear witness, "Truly this was the Son of God." At the right hand of Christ the holy women surround the Virgin, one taking her hand, another supporting her lest she faint; St. John is among this group. Above the arms of the Cross angels fly, with gestures of desolate sorrow. It is a scene at once touching and picturesque, of which French art, up to this time, had offered no example.[44]

Something important was happening to the human atmosphere in Europe. The note of hope and confidence was definitely weakening. Preoccupation with the pains and sorrows of human life was to grow and grow. Oddly enough the influence of Francis fed this mistrust of fortune and this decadent melancholy which was to increase, just as he himself, in his later years, came to brood more persistently upon the sufferings of Jesus. More and more the "imitation of Christ" took on a color of unhealthy brooding, which might become fanatic to the point of insanity. We are told that one poor friar carried his imitation back to the period of Jesus' infancy, getting himself swaddled and diapered like a baby, and stretched out in a cradle.[45] Pages, volumes, of meditations were indited upon the Passion, right on through the fifteenth century.

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[43] This change can be seen in reproductions, with textual comment, in Venturi, *Storia dell'Arte Italiana,* V, chaps. i, ii. See also Male, *L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Age en France,* chap. i.

[44] *Ibid.,* 3-4.

[45] Salimbene's *Chronicle.*

Come into my garden,
My Sister, my Spouse;
Look how I have made it ready
With myrrh.

So one of these meditations begins. It continues, "That garden, O my chosen Friend, is none other than the meditation of the heart upon the passion of Jesus." [46]

Is it not strange to see the joyous message of Francis of Assisi translated into a premonitory symptom of world-sickness, destined to grow until the awakening of a new positive impulse toward life in the Renaissance?

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[46] *Indica Mihi—Très pieuses meditationes sur la vie et passion du Christ,* trans. into French from a fifteenth-century manuscript, 1926, by M. M. Saeyeys.

## XXXVI

We have left the Albigensian Crusade somewhat far behind. Its political and military results were shabby enough, if one insists upon viewing it as a crusade, and not a land-grabbing expedition in the feudal style. But it trailed behind it an institution which remains, in the popular mind, perhaps the darkest blot upon the Middle Ages—the Inquisition. It is only fair to say, however, that because of its elements and incidents of ugly melodrama, the extensiveness, the duration, even the cruelty of the institution, particularly as it existed in the medieval period, is usually exaggerated. This exaggeration is natural enough. The very idea of such an institution is anathema to contemporary conception to begin with, and even when one has attempted to put it in historical perspective there remain many dark pages difficult to condone.

In attempting to put the Inquisition in its proper historical perspective, we should remember, first of all, that however little persecution or bloody punishment may be consistent with either the original gospel or the best traditions of Christianity, however little it is consistent with the place and function given religion in contemporary society, however little inherent reasonableness there may be in the attempt to enforce, not only types of action, but articles of faith—things to be *believed,* some sort of coercive action in the matter of enforcing Christian regularity, even in the internal and personal affair of belief, was hardly inconsistent with the place religion occupied in the medieval scheme of things. A settled body of religious doctrine was *taken for granted* long before any conspicuous attempts to enforce unified belief was ever made. Medieval heresy became, first noticeable, then important socially, because of two different currents, flowing in a sense parallel, and advancing toward the attention of broader masses of people almost contemporaneously. The first of these currents was that of intellectual curiosity, led naturally enough, as among Eastern Christians from the fourth century, to further define and clarify that body of doctrine which had come to be naïvely accepted without much inquiry. The second current was that of popular revolt, both against the acceptance of their salvation at the hands of a priesthood they could not in general respect, and against some of the formalities and artificialities of those means of salvation themselves, irrespective of the persons through whom it was mediated.

It can hardly be too often said, because of many misconceptions, that the medieval intellectual attitude sought free inquiry, perhaps as consciously and consistently as other periods have aimed to do so. Metaphysical discussion, which can hardly go far without touching matters of interest to religion, has seldom been more rife in any period of well-known history than from the later twelfth century in Europe. The important philosophical systems of the thirteenth century were not constructed to protect, but to help explain and make reasonable the accepted doctrinal system. One system might pit itself against another, in discussion of even the most fundamental matters. True, all of them had certain common premises, not all everywhere acceptable to-day. But the play of dialectic about these premises was rich, free, subtle, and keen. If, for example, our whole university life to-day were suddenly to become preoccupied with discussions as to the metaphysical implications of those theories which the public mind connects with Einstein, and with scarcely anything else very seriously, contemporary university life might be likened to that of the full medieval period.

This university activity, however, represented but one, and by far the less important interest, of medieval Church and State in the matter of the stability of the religious doctrinal system. Here we must turn to an analogy quite different. We must try to imagine what would be likely to happen in contemporary communities, if everywhere groups of people began to discuss and promulgate social heterodoxies; if they flaunted anarchistic, communistic, socialistic colonies; interfered with the orderly processes of trade;

were disrespectful toward property rights; questioned decisions of courts of justice, and even the principles upon which judicial procedure, the legal precedents upon which court decisions rest, even more, the integrity of those persons by whom justice is administered.

In short, so soon as theological discussion, or departures from usual religious custom, began to disturb solid interests, to cause aberrations from ordinary habits, introduce in a new garb old immoralities to which society had accommodated itself differently, heresy was not at all the thing we are likely to think of it as being. A good citizen was, by all the hypotheses upon which law and custom were based, a good Christian, in the commonly accepted measure of well enough; and heresy was social anarchy. And, when the Inquisition had got well at work, heresy was social anarchy at a particularly inconvenient time; just when the pillars of society were beginning to exhibit a little shakiness. Only when we remember this, can we hope to put the actions of the Inquisition at all in their proper place.

Then, when we have so attempted to put the Inquisition in its proper place, we may go a step farther, to ask ourselves just how much the disappearance of such an institution as the Inquisition from contemporary society is due to what may be properly called tolerance, and how much to the mere fact that religion, whether Christian or otherwise, occupies to-day not at all the place in society, or the social structure, that it occupied in the Middle Ages. For tolerance, we must remember, is a word which may cover two quite distinct dispositions or attitudes, although in practical results these two may often appear to yield similar results. In primary etymology to tolerate a thing is to bear it, or *bear with it;* not to accept it, but to allow it existence, even though its continued existence be something of which we might wish to be rid. It may war with persuasion, but hardly to the point of violent extermination. But words, like pebbles rolled about a beach by troubled tides, too easily lose the corners and edges which give them definite character. So the word tolerance may come to express an attitude that is little more than an indifferent and blunted acceptance of any old thing at all. Properly speaking one cannot be tolerant in respect to this, and intolerant with respect to that. One is merely in earnest in one case, indifferent in the other. One cannot, for example, be genuinely tolerant of religious ideas and intolerant of social ideas. He may merely believe that the social opinions of others do, and the religious opinions of others do not, affect anything of importance to him.

Having so far cleared a way, we may state quite barely that the Middle Ages were really not tolerant, whether or not any other age as yet has been, and that almost everybody living in those times did think that religious ideas mattered.

The Inquisition was not merely an engine of intolerance, but it cannot be denied that it perpetrated many acts of cruelty, both mental and physical. Here again we must attempt to orient ourselves. That religion itself not only caused intolerance but inspired cruelty was almost assumed by the courageous enthusiasts of religious criticism of the eighteenth century. This the later nineteenth century criticism was disposed to modify to a statement that the exclusive and universal claims of the Christian religion generated these abuses, rather than religion itself. We have become less naïve in the last half century. We are quite conscious of the fact that intolerant zeal of any sort not only readily resorts to, but often finds little difficulty in defending, cruelty; by no means obliged for this to work itself into a religious frenzy. Every form of social order once established uses coercion, the moment it faces fear of dissolution; and we must not forget that Christianity, in the Middle Ages, was not a religion merely, but a social order largely. Medieval agencies of punishment and coercion were not very enlightened, and they were not at all squeamish in the matter of inflicting pain and shedding blood. Modern social coercion, so largely economic, can hardly ever be directly charged with, almost never sees, the pain it inflicts. It causes directly practically no bloodshed in times of peace. This change may involve a matter of morals, or it may at bottom involve more than anything a matter of taste, or distaste. At all events our humanitarian sensibilities cannot, without distortion, be turned back in interpretation of the Middle Ages.

Stripped of the distortions of prejudice, there still remains enough that may be said against the Inquisition. It was, first of all, fundamentally inconsistent with the salvation which Christianity pretended to proffer, and the attitude Christianity pretended to inculcate. Through all the blindness of the herd-instinct, making of the Inquisition an institution never possible of effective establishment save where seconded by a large mass of favoring popular opinion; through all the misguided zeal of inquisitors, firmly convinced that in persecuting heretics they were defending the interests of God, this inconsistency could never be entirely forgotten. It introduced everywhere an element of hypocrisy into inquisitorial proceedings. Cruel punishments were given pious names. Life imprisonment in vile dungeons was "penance"; death sentences were never pronounced, but the guilty were "relaxed" into the arms of the secular authorities, with recommendation to mercy, while at the same time any hesitancy upon the part of the civil authorities to execute the "relaxed" met with rebuke and menace from the ecclesiastical authorities.

But such hypocrisy was not the only deep psychological crime of the Inquisition. Another hypocrisy was enforced upon it, in that while in effect it was a judicial court, with power to inflict punishments ranging from social humiliation, infliction of physical pain, exaction of pecuniary fines, deprivation of civil and property right, of liberty, even of life, the office of the Inquisition passed formally as, and retained the forms of being, a missionary endeavor. Its formal intent was to examine, instruct, chasten, bring about penitence, pardon, and reinstate. As a matter of fact a very small proportion of those charged with, or even convicted of heresy, were ever put to death.[1] On the other hand, it was not an institution aiming to assure justice, but rather to guard a doctrinal and institutional system, intact and secure. As such it might pardon after proper penance, but to release one brought before its tribunal as innocent might weaken its prestige. The inquisitor Bernard Gui confesses this fact. The believing laity might find "material for scandal" in an inquisitorial process abandoned without some measure of condemnation. One charged with heresy might seem to the believers to have outwitted an organization believed to be the repository of unanswerable arguments in defense of the system of the Church.[2] In consequence acquittals were virtually unknown, and "nearly every case brought before the Holy Office involved the sentence of one penalty or another." [3]

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[1] During a period of fifteen years (1308-23) Bernard Gui "relaxed" but 45 cases out of 613. Another famous inquisitor, during a period of three years, did not sentence a single heretic to death. (Tuberville. Lea's figures differ a trifle.)

In other words, the inquisitor, though sitting in a sense as a judge, was in reality the accuser, and he was an accuser almost bound to find the accused in some degree guilty. To hand an accused heretic over to be burned was, as has been said, " a synonym for failure." And so the Inquisition was not interested in making martyrs, but rather in bringing about reconciliations. But in the face of all these reconciliations effected, whatever mercy or pardoning grace after penitence was vouchsafed was cloven by this deep hypocrisy, that its end and purpose was first of all, and generally no more than, the preservation of that organization the Inquisition was instituted to protect. What matter if the spirit of the victim be broken, so long as the "faith"—which if we may judge by the forms of abjuration of heresy was little more than a recognition of the power of pope and prelate hierarchy—was maintained intact? [4] The Inquisition pretended to save souls, it intended little more than the saving of the authority of the Church in Christendom.

But the Inquisition was not only involved in a deep inconsistency, betrayed many places in contrast between its formal pretense and its actual operation. It also attempted an impossible task, and one which inevitably opened the way to abuses even of its intention, and to opportunities for exploitation. Roughly speaking these three types of difficulty developed in the order named, and may best be understood by sketching briefly the history of attempts to deal with heresy, preceding and following the institution of the Inquisition.

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[2] "Ex altera quoque parte, layci fideles inde sumunt materiam scandali quod inceptum inquisitionis negotium contra aliquem quasi confuse relinquitur et quodam modo infirmantur un fide, videntes quod viri litterati sic a personis rudibus et vilibus illuduntur, quia credunt nos ita in promptu habere ipsas rationies lucidas et apertas quod nullus in hiis nobis valeat obviare quin statim sciamus ipsum convincere, ita quod etiam ipsi layci clare possintipsas intelligere rationes." Bernard Gui, *De Modo* . . ., I.

[3] Tuberville, *Medieval Heresy and the Inquisition,* 206.

[4] *Ibid.,* 228.

The problem of heresy was no new one to the Church, when late in the eleventh century it began to be recognized as one by medieval Christianity. Almost from the beginning the Christian community had been troubled by varieties of opinion and teaching. An authoritative Church in the West had only come to be, first by standing firm against speculative tendencies in the East, and then, by cutting off, to right and left, heretical movements; or, more properly speaking perhaps, by firm and dogmatic decision on various occasions as to which of two controversial groups was, and which was not, heretic. Heresy became, as we have noted, of political importance from the time that Constantine spread his protection over the Christian community. Immediately the imperial government took the matter of persecuting heretics in hand. They were subject to banishment, confiscation, even the penalty of death, at the hands of the civil authority. This situation was complicated by the fact that a series of emperors alternated, almost, between Arianism and Athenasianism. But in western Europe the establishment of a kingdom of the Franks, under the Merovingians, and later of the Frankish empire, under Charlemagne, laid the question of heresy to rest for several centuries.

When again, late in the eleventh century, heresy began to show its face with some conspicuousness, a wave of persecution of popular origin arose. Many of the killings that resulted were in effect unlawful lynchings, without authority either from Church or State, and on conspicuous occasions both religious and secular authorities interfered in an attempt to protect the victims. In the twelfth century such lynchings became more frequent, and again prelates in some places felt that this cruelty was inconsistent with the proper treatment of wanderers from the fold of faith, and strove to protect heretics from the mob of persecutors. But the secular power soon began to find itself interested in the matter of heresy, always likely to cause social disorder. Considerably before the time when the Church may be directly implicated, secular princes had inflicted the penalty of death upon heretics.

Through the twelfth century the situation was relatively simple. "Spontaneously, without any direct incitement from the clergy, the people regarded the heretic with intense abhorrence," [5] as popular vengeance often testified. The Church felt bound to exert disciplinary power, the State was no less interested. In 1184 the Pope, Lucius III, and the Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, met and issued jointly a program for the prosecution of suspected heretics. From the standpoint of the State heresy was rebellion, from that of the Church, both an offense against God and the individual soul. This marked no change in attitude, but rather an orderly attempt to take the matter of punishing heretics out of the hands of the popular mob. However, although sometimes inflicted, both by the mob and by secular authority, the death penalty was not definitely legalized until 1224, and then, strangely enough, by an emperor (Frederick II) himself suspected of being, if not frankly infidel, at least skeptical. From then the legalization of the death penalty spread generally throughout western Europe.

The clear legalization of punishment in the matter of heresy also emphasized the regularization of judgment in matters of heresy. Punishment was naturally regarded a matter for the secular authorities. The judgment of heretics was established, by old authority, as resting in the first instance in the bishop's court. But bishops were likely to be busy men, and almost certain to be also feudal princes. They had many interests, among which some bishops might consider the question of heresy of secondary importance. They were but incidentally heresy hunters, and unlikely to bother about or even know of it until it was evidenced by conspicuous active signs. Sometimes, even in such cases, there might be little incentive to active zeal. This incentive came to be particularly lacking when, in Aquitaine, heresy began to attract, not only large masses of people, but no small number of the nobles.

[5] *Ibid.,* 134.

In short, without active popular disapproval of heretics, bishops might be slow to take determined steps, and without the support of local secular authority they were almost helpless. It was in facing this situation that Innocent III turned the contemporary crusading zeal against heresy in Aquitaine, as the Albigensian Crusade.

The termination of this crusade left still another situation. There was so much heresy in Aquitaine that the bishop's court, busy with many other matters, had neither time nor organization with which to adequately handle the matter of heresy. Now at length, the papacy, left at the summit of its prestige with the death of Innocent III, resolved to take into its own hands the question of judging heretics, and the Inquisition was instituted as a direct organ of the pope. It was not created all at once in a single enactment, but from the middle of the thirteenth century a papal inquisition existed, and before the end of the century had been introduced, with various degrees of success, into most of the countries of western Europe.[6]

The establishment of an inquisition put an entirely new aspect upon the whole question of heresy hunting and persecution. No one before had been exclusively interested in discovering heresy before it was rather clearly evident. Now there were professional inquisitors, with no other job so interesting perhaps, and with none other they might consider so salutary, as that of nipping heresy in the bud, before it had become sufficiently evident to infect, either the entire soul of the heretic or surrounding society.

But, by the middle of the thirteenth century there were a very large number of people, irrespective of convinced heretics of various sects, who, though they might have been safely trusted to make the required and regular Christian gestures, were hardly able, in the midst of growing doubts and questionings, to withstand the wily questioning of practiced inquisitors. Indeed, perhaps the convinced heretics were safest of all against such a tribunal. They had, we are told by one of the most active inquisitors, devised crafty ways of avoiding either false or incriminating replies.

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[6] Lea's work, *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages,* traces the attempts to introduce the Inquisition into various parts of Europe with considerable detail.

> Ask one of the Vaudois, writes Bernard Gui, about his faith and what he holds and believes. He answers, "I believe all that a good Christian should believe." Try to discover what he believes to be a good Christian, and he answers, "He who believes as the holy Church teaches and believes." . . . Asked what he calls the holy Church, he replies, "What, Master, do you believe and hold to be the holy Church?" If you reply . . . he then says, "And I also believe so," but meaning as he says it, that he believes that I truly believe that to be holy Church which I state to believe so.[7]

In short, convinced sectarian heretics might be trained beforehand in anticipation of examination, and might be prepared with parrying answers. They too must be examined privately, lest they confound inquisitors with learning of their own. But the honestly muddled, or the honest doubter, with no intention to stray from the bosom of the Church, was almost certain to be somewhere entrapped. In fact one suspects that all inquisitors did not remain ignorant as to how many people might be frightened into a condition of not allowing themselves to think even, about any matters which might somewhere touch religion and the Church. Indeed it is hardly strange that, once accused before the Inquisition, practically no one ever got off without the taint of heresy being somewhere discovered, and some consequential penance being imposed. Such a situation was intolerable, and could not last. It left many broken spirits, but far more smoldering fires. Heresy chased from open act into the mind, into the hardly articulate wonderings of faith, presented an impossible task, the whole question of the wisdom or the justification of an attempt to keep alive an outward unity of faith and worship aside.

But this even was not all. Assuming that the vast majority of Christian citizens were, for the time, willing to see properly convicted heretics subjected to some punishment, even if torture was an instrument used in their trial—and the Inquisition had not invented, but had borrowed from civil procedure the use of torture in eliciting evidence—rank injustice in a procedure which grew more and more arrogant and arbitrary wherever it became effective, inevitably arose. In 1290 a complaint with powerful backing was laid before Philip the Fair (of France). Philip sent representatives to look into the two inquisitors charged with numerous abuses of their power, and they were in consequence removed. Already inquisitors had been convicted of excesses, and one in the north of France imprisoned. In 1233 an active and rabid inquisitor was murdered in Germany (Conrad of Marburg).

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[7] Bernard Gui, *De Modo* . . . (ed. Mollat), II, 6.

Then finally, to the innate futility of the attempt, and to its arbitrary abuse, was to be added the further crime of exploitation for pecuniary gain. Heretics, according to old tradition which might claim support from Augustine, were legitimately deprived of their property. At the beginning this did not always tempt exploitation, since at least the houses heretics had occupied were razed to the ground, cursed, and no other building might be erected upon the ground. This uneconomic practice did not permanently remain, but meanwhile another abuse found an entering wedge. Penances of different sorts might be commuted into money payments, and the payment of some sum might seem to the penanced preferable to a pilgrimage into Italy or Spain. The medieval Inquisition had less wealthy prey than that later in Spain, but inquisitors, granted at the outset definite salaries, might find it a relatively easy matter to increase this amount indirectly. As a matter of fact the Inquisition, even with the assistance of penance commuted into money payments, did not usually pay its way, and peculation upon the part of officers of the institution, subtractions difficult to trace, since the Inquisition accounted to the pope alone, were an annoyance from many angles. More and more the activities of the Holy Office became sporadic. More and more they became evidently dependent for success upon the measure of support they received from secular rulers. The power of the papacy, at its height at the beginning of the thirteenth century, was soon to wane. The Inquisition, though never definitely laid aside, and later to be revived, showed more and more plainly its incompetence to check, in Europe generally, the spread of doubt and heresy leading up to the broad movement of reformation of the sixteenth century.

The Inquisition had a significant indirect effect, as adding to those forces which were unsettling clear lines as to precisely where orthodoxy rested. The farther heresy was pursued among the complex recesses of Christian consciousness, the less possible was it to put one's hand upon anything definite and certain, save perhaps bare and dogmatically enunciated formulas. It emphasized unreasoning assent, and as such became the last defense of the medieval papacy, and a prelude to the attitude which was to be emphasized later by the Council of Trent, under the inspiration of the Jesuit company. From this followed a tendency to split off theology from the current of free metaphysical speculation. In reaction philosophy tended, either to harden into dogmatic defense, or to cleave itself free, as an independent organ of truth-seeking. Here we are led to the material of the chapter which is to follow. But this tendency, which can rather be suggested than discussed within the boundaries of our present purpose, serves naturally as leading our attention toward that religious order to which the Inquisition was most prominently confided: the Order of Friars Preachers, or, as popularly known, the Dominican friars. This order was founded by a Spanish monk, Dominic of Calaraga (or Calaruega) early in the thirteenth century. Its formation was inspired by the preaching and missionary effort of this Dominic, during the early period of the Albigensian Crusade. A biographer of Dominic, and member of his Order, calls attention to the fact that the name of Dominic is never mentioned in connection with the warlike enterprises of this crusade.[8] He is said both to have used and counseled gentleness against heretics, even rescuing one of them from the secular authorities, prophesying that eventually he would become good and holy, which prophecy, the chronicler relates, was made good some twenty years later, when the rescued heretic became himself a Dominican.[9] There was, however, an

[8] Lacordaire, *Vie de Saint Dominique,* chap. vi.
[9] Thierry d'Apolda, *Vie de Saint Dominique,* chap. iv.

end to Dominic's patience, and when, at the beginning of the Crusade, he quit Aquitaine, it was with a warning threat:

> For many years I have uselessly exhorted you with gentleness, preaching, praying, weeping; but according to a proverb of my country, where benediction can accomplish nothing, the rod may succeed. You shall see us excite against you princes and prelates, who, alas! will arm nations and kingdoms against this land, and many will perish by the sword; the country will be ravished, its walls demolished, and you, the pity of it! you, they will reduce to servitude. This may the rod accomplish where blessing and gentleness has had no result.[10]

With this experience behind him, Dominic created his order for the *conversion* of heretics. Thus it happened that the Inquisition, which remained in form an attempt to *convert,* rather naturally drifted into the hands of the Dominicans.[11] A second reason why this order came naturally to exercise inquisitorial power was the fact that, shortly after its foundation, a new office was created at the Curia, first conferred upon Dominic himself, and later to descend in this one religious order. The title of this office was "Master of the Sacred Palace." Its holder became the official theologian of the pope, the official censor of books printed or introduced at Rome, the person who decided who were to be made *doctors* of the Roman university, and who were to enjoy the privilege of preaching before the pope.

As a matter of fact no religious community thus far founded had from its foundation so clear an intellectual purpose. The Rule was drawn to favor intellectual pursuits. Heads of Dominican houses were not only allowed, but counseled by the Rule, to lighten the burden of religious discipline where it interfered with study. Moreover Dominic soon centered the activity of his community in the three ruling centers of intellectual life: Rome, Paris, and Bologna. The order soon forged ahead intellectually, producing Albertus Magnus, the first scholastic philosopher to have a fairly complete knowledge of Aristotle, and the master of Thomas Aquinas, also of the same order.

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[10] Quoted by Lacordaire from an old manuscript originally preserved in the oldest conventicle of the Order at Toulouse.

[11] The inquisitorial power was divided with the Franciscans, at least in a measure because of the rivalry and jealousy between these two orders of friars.

Thus we may see how, out of the Albigensian heresy, and the Inquisition, indirectly grew the more fixed and dogmatic branch of scholastic philosophy. This *realist* branch was, to be sure, to produce its reforming heretic in Wycliffe, but we shall note that, in the atmosphere out of which later Martin Luther was to arise, it was another school which was dominant. The scene was set, for the struggle in which realists and nominalists, called upon to absorb an increasing mass of theory and information, were to work the philosophical undermining of the medieval point of view.

# XXXVII

WERE one to choose a particular event as marking the apex of the medieval religious structure of Europe, perhaps the Lateran Council of 1215, known as the Twelfth General Council of the Church, and presided over by Innocent III, might serve better than any other. Noting the Biblical text chosen by the pope, for his discourse opening this council, one is struck as with a note of prophecy: "Earnestly have I desired to eat this Passover with you before my time of suffering."

For a little moment, in form at least, the Eastern and Western churches, now for centuries separated, were reunited, and a canon of this council settles the precedence of the Eastern Patriarchs.[1] Moreover, the efficacy of papal control at this council is evidenced by the fact that, in three sessions, some seventy canons were adopted, of combined length sufficient to cover some fifty pages of ordinary book print.

Externally the ideal of Christendom under papal domination might have seemed achieved, but as one runs through the text of the canons, one is conscious of an institution strengthening its defenses. The papal counselors, who had doubtless prepared these canons, during the period of more than two years between the convocation of the council and its assembly, were very conscious of enemies without the fold, although mingled with it in society, both as personalities and as ideas.

Lacking space to trace the manifold course of events, we are obliged to seize upon significant and symbolic happenings. Setting side by side some strange social provisions of these canons, and a fanciful tale, given its first conspicuous literary expression at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor some years later, we may be prepared for a later more circumstantial story of the dissolution of the medieval ideal of Christendom, united under a religious institution and a dogmatic system; the intellectual aspects of which dissolution, at its beginning, this chapter will briefly summarize.

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[1] Canon V.

Canon xlviii of the Fourth Lateran Council states that already, in some provinces, Jews and Saracens were distinguished by being obliged to wear clothing which would immediately indicate the fact that they were not Christians. This canon advises that this practice be made general throughout Christendom. Not long after, as an incident of the Albigensian Crusade, heretics were assimilated to the custom of obliging unbelievers to wear a mark of their outcast state upon their clothing.[2]

It was consistent with the scheme of medieval civilization for the individual's social status to be clearly marked. Here, however, the clear purpose was to make more evident the fact that non-Christians had no regular status, and were at best tolerated outcasts.

Five years after the assembly of this council, Frederick II, a Hohenstaufen and grandson of Barborossa (Frederick I), was crowned Holy Roman Emperor. While ready, for political reasons, to extirpate heresy, this aspirant for absolute power such as was inconsistent with the medieval conception of monarchy encouraged freedom of thought and discussion at his courts in Sicily and Naples, and is credited with having declared that Jesus, Moses, and Mohamet were all three impostors. Thence perhaps the inspiration of a collection of tales, under the title *Novellino,* one of which may be set, as suggested above, opposite the sixty-eighth canon of the Lateran Council above referred to.

> There was once [the tale recounts] a father who had three sons, and a ring set with a precious stone, the finest which existed in the world. Each son entreated his father to leave the ring to him, when he should die. The father, in order to satisfy all three, called a goldsmith and said to him, "Master, make me two rings just like this one, and set in each of them a stone similar to this stone." The goldsmith made the rings, so like in every way that none save the father was able to distinguish which was the real. He called his three sons, each separately,

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[2] Lepers and prostitutes were later required generally in Europe to also wear outward marks upon their clothing. Robert, *Les signes d'infamie au moyen age.*

telling none of them the secret, so that each imagined he possessed the true ring. . . ." [That, concludes he who recounts the tale, is the story of the three religions (Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan).] The Father, who gave them, knows which is the best, and his sons, we with the others, all believe that it is we who possess the true.[3]

While a church council, meeting in a palace of the pope, attempted to make adherence to organized Christianity clearly coincident with European citizenship, philosophical speculation was reaching out to enrich its basis and inspiration, with consequences perilous for the future. It is a fact, painful to authoritarians, that thought which is not kept isolated from fresh information is always in danger of destroying structures which had hitherto appeared pretty solid affairs. Contrary to a common misconception, however, medieval thought made little attempt to close itself to fresh information, nor was it conspicuously engaged in inanely revolving about its own dialectic center, exercised as to the number of angels who might comfortably dance upon the point of a pin. The thirteenth century was a period of marked intellectual activity in which, while the scholastic system built up, it was also persistently sapped from within and worn and filed from without, paving the way, as we shall see, for later and broader religious changes.

In this scientific age we have grown accustomed to call a generalized explanation of natural phenomena, so universal that no known fact contradicts it, a law of nature. It is then quite natural to turn around and say that what we have observed happens *because of the law;* which is thus made a sort of creator of what it explains. Were we to go a step farther, using a term more fashionable in the Middle Ages than now, we might add that the law was *more real* than the phenomena it appeared to explain, or even that the law was *the real,* of which the thing we see (the phenomenon) was a rather opaque, unreliable, unsubstantial clothing.

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[3] This story reappears in Boccaccio's *Decameron,* and again conspicuously in the eighteenth century, in the drama of Lessing, *Nathan der Weise,* one of the dramatic landmarks of the religious Aufklärung. See Gebhart, *L'Italie Mystique,* chap. v. and Fischer, *G. E. Lessing als Reformator der deutschen Literatur,* II, 38ff.

In a way somewhat as here suggested that branch of medieval thought called *realism* considered what they called *universals.* Universals were the qualities we predicate of things when, for example, we say that John Smith is a man, a plane figure of three sides is a triangle. In the most extreme form medieval realism considered that there was a substance which we might call *man-ness,* anterior to the existence of John Smith, an abstract substance which might be called *triangularity,* but for which no arrangement of three nonparallel lines in a plane could ever produce a triangle.

But someone found, in the works of an old encyclopædist,[4] the statement that a universal was the generalization of many particularities under one single name (*nomen*), or a single word (*vox*); and another old writer had defined *vox* as a "motion of air produced by the tongue."[5] Would it not be disconcerting to discover that what one had taken to be more real than anything one saw was but a motion of the air produced by the tongue?

Between the two extremes thus roughly suggested the realist-nominalist controversy fought out a battle which need occupy us here merely in pointing out how nominalism disturbed the equilibrium of the medieval religious structure. The system of Thomas Aquinas, and the ordered sign language of the Gothic cathedrals, assumed, with varying degrees of consciousness, the realist conception of universals. Things were the signs of substances and ultimately the signs of the ultimate substance, God. But the nominalist turned this around. First, universals were not substances, but names (*nomina,* hence nominalists), and one did not proceed, in search of reality, from John Smith to some *man-ness,* by virtue of which he was a man; but for the nominalist way of regarding the matter, the very *John-Smithness* of John was an ultimate reality, in part thrown overboard when, calling him a man, you lumped him together with a heterogeneous lot of other human beings, in search of that *man-ness* which no one ever would have got curious about, but for the existence of John and a considerable number of his equally individual and concrete fellow men.

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[4] Martianus Capella of the fifth century.

[5] Boethius of the sixth century, and one of the earliest sources of medieval knowledge as to Greek philosophy.

So nominalism increased the importance of John Smith from the religious standpoint. John Smith was real, God was real. The sign language of the Church was the motion of the air caused by the tongue, and the question of John's salvation seemed to rest more directly between him and God, while theology and symbol seemed rather a way of talking about salvation than guaranteeing it. In this way nominalism and speculative mysticism, such as that of Meister Eckhart, approaching to be sure the problem of salvation from different angles, might play at bottom much the same game.

Another result of nominalism, and the increased importance of the individual human being, was a heightened and rather different interest in the things which went on in him, his psychology. After a period of controversy, particularly sharp in the University of Paris, the center of scholastic doctrine, the Franciscan and Dominican friars were allowed to install teachers in the faculties of the universities, and we are not surprised to find Franciscans, some of them by now immersed in the intellectual currents of the time, among the nominalists; also insisting that the ultimate reality of John Smith was not that *intellect,* with which he might search out universals, and with them erect hierarchies of abstractions, but that his ultimate being was rather an acting, struggling, often erring *will.* As a consequence of this conclusion, if he were to be saved, it seemed that the process of saving him was rather that of forming in him a will habituated to act in a way God approved, rather than that of his treading, in properly ordered progression, a ladder of universals, or in attaching himself appropriately to an ordered institution, which claimed to represent God, the final universal.

We left the Moslem world rapidly building up, after a swift flood of conquest, a civilization largely imitative. By way of Constantinople, particularly after the capture of that city by Western crusaders early in the thirteenth century, and even half a century earlier from Spain, the principal works of Moslem scholars began to find their way into Christian Europe. Along with this Moslem thought came currents of Jewish thought, which on the whole were dependent upon or parallel with the work of the Mohammedan literati, and written rather in Arabic than Hebrew.[6]

Philosophers driven from Athens when Justinian closed the schools there, in the sixth century, had gone east to Babylon, which had also still earlier become the center of Jewish intellectual culture. In Babylon later, Jews and Hellenes alike had been engulfed by the Moslem conquest, with the result that, with the birth of Moslem intellectual enthusiasm, works of Aristotle, and of the Neoplatonists, soon began to be translated and commentated at length by Arab doctors. Many of these Greek works had already been translated into Syriac, and Arab translations were often made, not from the original Greek, but from the Syriac translations. Also Aristotle's thought was often confused with, and interpreted by, Neoplatonic conceptions. Such confusions were not rendered less by these Arabic translations being again retranslated into Latin. However distorted, the works of Greek thinkers, Aristotle particularly, became more widely known during the early years of the thirteenth century, with important results for the intellectual atmosphere. The influence upon the scholastic philosophy itself is too technical to detain us here. Of more importance was a gradually broadening interest in natural phenomena, encouraged by the contents of the works of Arabian philosophers, who were physicians, not clerics, and who therefore were not inclined to look upon physical facts as corporeal signs of spiritual and mystic truths.[7] On the contrary these doctors, who had themselves a sacred book to deal with (the *Koran,* or *Quran*) sometimes might claim that the natural and the supernatural were so remotely related as the expression of an identical truth that what was true in theology might be false in philosophy, and vice versa.[8]

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[6] Both by the sale of manuscripts, and by their translations, the Jews, whose trade relations took them everywhere, contributed in an important way to the spread of oriental thought in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Also, even long before, they had important schools in the south of France.

[7] "Ut per similitudinem proprietatum corporalium intellectum spiritualem et mysticum facilius in divinis scripuris accipere valeamus," Barthelmi l'Anglais. The title of another work is illuminating: "Summa de exemplis et rerum similitudinibus."

The appearance of this new scientific interest was disturbing, and may be exemplified in the fate of an English Franciscan, Roger Bacon. Bacon, a contemporary of Thomas Aquinas, composed works on alchemy, on retarding old age, on medicine and chemistry, perspective and mathematics. He attacked authority, custom, common uneducated opinion, and pedantry, as the four causes of error, and declares experimental science to be "the mistress of all knowledge." The General of his Order (Bonaventura) forbade Bacon either to teach or to write. Then, after a short respite, which he owed to the interest of a pope in his works, he was imprisoned for another period of fourteen years, and passed into legend, somewhat as Gerbert before him, as a magician in league with Satan.

Scientific curiosity entered more than one monastery to breed chemists and alchemists,[9] and ere the fourteenth century began this *new science* was being made popular in works no longer written in Latin only, but in popular tongues. Even in a long love epic (*Le Confessio Amantis* of the English poet Gower) a whole book might be devoted to science. In one of these vernacular works on science, philosophy is said to be divided into three parts. Theology shows "the nature of things that have no body at all"; physics treats of the "nature of things which have bodies"; while mathematics deals with those "incorporeals" which belong to the physical world."[10] A division of philosophy arranged in such terms emphasizes on its face, not the "order of things," but the *bodies* or bodiless existence of things, and in itself betrays a new interest in physical science.

Too much must not be expected of this new science, becoming popular, but the interest in it was broader and of a different temper than that which had preceded. Early in the twelfth century the popular scientific curiosity had been fed with such little bits as the following upon the elephant, and upon the nature of magnetic iron.

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[8] Such was the so-called *doctrine of the two truths*, borrowed by some Christian doctrines attempting to steer clear of theological difficulties in assimilating the new science.

[9] A list of chemical paraphernalia found in one Benedictine abbey in 1260 has interest, Haven, *La vie et les Oeuvres de maître Arnaud de Villenuve*, 33. The contemporary document contains at the same time a warning against the dangers of practicing the art.

[10] *Le livre de trésor,* Brunetto Latine, written late in the thirteenth century. See Langlois, *La Vie en France au Moyen Age,* III, 335ff.

> *Elephant.* When the time for reproduction comes the elephants, male and female, go toward the Orient, even so far as Paradise, where they eat the fruit of the tree Mandragore. The female conceives and, fearing the dragon, she lays her offspring in deep water. Meanwhile the male mounts guard. (Explanation) The elephants are representative of Adam and Eve.
>
> The odor of the bones and hair of an elephant, burned, drives away serpents and vermine. According to Isidore, these animals are like enormous bulls, with teeth of ivory. They bear castles upon their backs. . . . Having legs all of one piece and unjointed they are obliged to sleep standing up, leaning against a tree or a wall. . . . The people of the country where they are utilize this circumstance to capture them, since when fallen to the ground they cannot rise. They saw down the tree, or undermine the base of the wall against which the animal has leaned to sleep, thus upset and capture him.[11]
>
> *Magnet.* Color of iron, attracts iron. It is found in the river Jordan. It serves to test the fidelity of women. Place this stone on the head of your sleeping wife: if she is chaste she will turn upon her stomach, if not upon her back. Besides it cures hydropsie, but whoever drinks it three times, whether man or woman, is rendered impotent. Thieves use it to terrorize and put to flight the occupants of houses they intend to rob, for the stone in question, placed upon burning coals, gives to all who breathe the fumes the illusion that everything is about to collapse.[12]

As an advance upon such science as this, popular expositions of the later thirteenth and early fourteenth century explain that the earth is round, measure its circumference and diameter, not without some rough general accuracy; guess rather wildly at the size of the moon and sun, and their distance from the earth; tell of the motions of the stars, explaining further the influence of the stars upon human character and fate; name and explain the signs of the zodiac, which were, because of their relation to astrology, a matter

[11] Philippe de Thaon, *Bestiaire* (before 1121).
[12] Philippe de Thaon, *Lapidaire.*

of great interest to all this early science; give fanciful, but scientifically reasoned, explanations of anatomy and physiology; seek the material basis of physical phenomena in four elements—earth, water, air, and fire. With these four elements are correlated four qualities—hot, cold, moist and dry. Earth is a mixture of the cold and dry, water of the cold and moist, air of the hot and moist, fire of the hot and dry. Passing to physiology and psychology these same four qualities are important: the *blood,* of the nature of air, is hot and moist; the *phlegm* cold and moist; a third *humor,* part of which goes into the bile, is hot and dry; a fourth, *melancholy,* that humor farthest distant from the principle of life, is cold and dry. Life is a mixture of the activities of these four different *humors,* the properties of which, in varied combination, explain the various dispositions of men.

Explaining the dispositions of human beings on the basis of principles drawn from physics was departing far from the idea of Augustine, that the earth had been created, and was sustained, merely as the theater where men and women fought out the battle of salvation. It led, in fact, to quite a different theory of humanity, to become typical of Renaissance thought: the theory of *macrocosm* and *microcosm,* concluding generally that what the material universe was in a universal extended form, this was man in a smaller more limited form. Nature was a *big kosmos,* man a *little kosmos.* The importance of John Smith was again magnified; but with a troubling question: Was John Smith's soul an individual entity, or but a temporarily disconnected portion of the world-soul? It was disconcerting, just at the moment when John appeared to be a little universe in himself, to find that he might perhaps have no individual soul to save.

The extended knowledge of Aristotle's thought might further be upsetting to prevalent Christian ethical ideals. This possibility may be made briefly concrete by quoting from the work of a Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages, who also had drunk at the springs of Aristotle, through Arabic intermediaries, whose thought is of importance in this movement, and who writes:

> Virtues are psychic conditions and dispositions which are midway between two reprehensible extremes. . . . To illustrate, abstemiousness is a disposition which adopts a midcourse between inordinate passion and total insensibility to pleasure—the one being an exaggeration, the other a deficiency—alike classed among moral imperfections. . . .[13]
>
> When at times some of the pious ones deviated to one extreme by fasting, keeping nightly vigils, refraining from eating meat or drinking wine, renouncing sexual intercourse, clothing themselves in woolen and hairy garments . . . they did so partly as a means of restoring the health of their souls . . . and partly because of the immorality of the townspeople. . . . When the ignorant observed saintly men acting thus, not knowing their motives, they considered their deeds of themselves virtuous, and so, blindly imitating their acts, . . . chastised their bodies . . . imagining that they had acquired perfection and moral worth, and that by this means man could approach near to God, as if he hated the human body and desired its destruction.[14]

One may well choose these quotations from Maimonides, because he was a pious Jew, attempting to harmonize the things he had learned of Aristotle with Jewish orthodoxy. In their private lives the Arabian sages were often moral anarchists in comparison with him. But even his moderate doctrine of the golden mean was disturbing to a society long taught to look with awe and wonder upon observant monks, proportionately as they were strenuous in attempts to *kill the flesh* and dull their natural susceptibilities to sensuous appeal.

We have spoken of the dissemination of new ideas imported into western Europe by way of the Moslem world, and of the more popular spread of these ideas in works written in the popular tongue. New ideas, expressed in formal treatises of the learned are expressed with a consciousness of where they connect with the older body of knowledge, and are seldom intentionally given revolutionary form. Roger Bacon had no intention of attacking the theological system, considered himself a loyal son of the Church, wrote of the relation between philosophy and theology, stating

[13] *The Eight Chapters of Maimonides on Ethics* (text and trans. of J. I. Gorfinkle), 55.

[14] *Ibid.*, 62.

that all true wisdom is contained in the Scriptures, at least by implication. The same knowledge popularized appeals to public curiosity with no such nice sense of saving the old, even if with the *tour de force* of a theory that what is true in philosophy may be false in theology, or vice versa. There was however a third, still looser, more informal and irresponsible medium for the dissemination of new ideas: the spoken word, and more particularly the spoken word of human wanderers, who passed from place to place, were strangers where they appeared, and thus might talk more freely and be listened to more gladly.

"At the present day there are few wayfarers," writes M. Jusserand. "It was far otherwise in the Middle Ages; many people were bound to a wandering existence, and started even from childhood on their lifelong journey."[15] Cobbling shoes, many simple crafts, were practiced by itinerant artisans; artists, whether minstrels, architects or sculptors, were wanderers between jobs often. Peddlers took their wares from village to village, more important merchants traveled from one fair to another. Laborers, bound to some portion of land as serfs, if they found conditions unpleasant, often took to the road stealthily, perhaps garbed as religious pilgrims, to find work elsewhere, or even to tramp from place to place, from love of the adventure, picking up odd jobs as they went. An important war ended, disbanded soldiers, reluctant to return to the laborious monotony of peace, often wandered in lawless groups for months or years. Quacks and crooks traveled perforce. In the public inns they met and mixed with radicals, freethinkers and heretics, who preached their doctrines in the taproom. There were several sorts of religious wanderers; Dominican and Franciscan friars particularly, privileged to preach by papal license. Later there were to be *pardoners,* both with and without papal license, who upon a theory still to be discussed, were to free men from the burden of their sins, for a cash consideration.

Chaucer, the English poet of the later fourteenth century, uses a band of traveling pilgrims as the background and frame of his tales, again reminding of the fact that ideas of many sorts were passed about, from one end of Europe to the other, by the many types of wayfarers. And many of these ideas were unsettling. The consciousness of social inequalities and oppressions was growing. The old settled social status was disturbed. After the battle of Poitiers, the Lord Mayor of London, a rich wine merchant, gave a dinner at which he entertained four kings (of England, Scotland, France, and Cyprus). To separate themselves from the poor:

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[15] *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages,* 23.

> Now hath vche riche a reule, to eten be hym-selve
> In a pryve parloure—
> Or in a chambre with a chymneye—and leve the chief halle,
> That was made for meles men to eaten in.[16]

The wandering minstrels, accustomed of old to sing their songs, and recount their tales of knightly heroism and courtly love, took up the new note of satire and unrest, "nibbling at God with their gullets when their guts were full," scolds *Piers Ploughman:*

> And gnawen god with the gorge
> When her gutte is full.

Wycliffe, the well-known English precursor of the Reformation, had a social, as well as a religious message. Even friars of St. Francis, the same poet quoted above complains, might attempt to prove, on the authority of Seneca:

> That all thyng under hevene
> ouhte to be in comune.

Thought, in short, was slipping its theological leading strings. The social order was not only changing, but it was no longer so tacitly assumed that, as an ordinance of God, it should remain unchanged. New ideas, new knowledge, penetrated more and more broadly; dared more and more boldly to show their faces. And none the less, underneath all this the Church still held firm. Kings were still weak, and still struggling with the stronger nobles. Indeed the Emperor Frederick II found to his cost, in the middle of the thirteenth century, that despite complaint at the growing exactions of the Curia, and general growing consciousness of the Church's shortcomings, this Church was still the most steady, stable, and trusted institution which existed, and that the pope was a safer court of final justice, and a surer guarantee of social peace, than existed elsewhere. Papal claims, as based upon the supposititious *Donation* of Constantine, were clearly enunciated against Frederick II, who in his turn warned the secular princes of the danger to their power which existed in any admission of such claims. None the less, at the Council of Lyons in the middle of the thirteenth century, the prestige of the papacy was tested successfully, in the excommunication of a brilliant emperor. European public opinion still sets its final hope, on earth as well as in heaven, upon the knees of the pope. This hope, however, we shall soon see sadly shaken.

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[16] Piers Ploughman, "Now every rich man has the custom to eat by himself in a private parlor . . . or in a chamber with a chimney, leaving the great hall, which was built for men to eat their meals in."

# XXXVIII

THE apex of the medieval religious structure, it has been said, might be marked by the Lateran Council of 1215. The thirty years following, for the papacy, were occupied above anything with the struggle between the pope and the emperor, forced to a climax by the imagination and ambition of Frederick II, to which the Council of Lyons, in 1245, which excommunicated the emperor, brought what certainly seemed victory to the pope. The extinction of the Hohenstaufens, at the death of Frederick II, but five years after his excommunication, promised a new period of "unlimited world dominion to the papacy."[1] Innocent rejoiced at his death with Biblical quotations: "The heavens are joyful and the earth exults." Soon after the pope returned in triumph to Italy, from which he had fled to call the Council of Lyons. However he still hesitated for almost two years to enter Rome, where he was indeed rather coldly received when he did so. For some months only he remained there, under the protection of the senators, and departed the spring of the following year. The Roman republic was in a period of glory, under the rule of a remarkable podesta (Branceleone),[2] and the pope was obliged to play locally but a secondary rôle. Before the year of this departure ended Innocent IV died. His successor, Alexander IV, despite some good qualities, was avaricious and weak. Almost immediately the papacy was involved in a mesh of Italian intrigue, scheming to regain southern Italy as a papal fief. Broader responsibilities of papal statesmanship were neglected, the disciplinary arm of the pontiff became lax, the moral reforms instituted by Gregory VII and continued by Innocent III rapidly lost ground. Lucrative offices in the Church were gradually seized by rich families, and the Roman court, forced to spend money in Italy for the furtherance of its temporal interests there, strengthened the machinery with which it might hope to exact larger and larger sums from European Christians everywhere. "Accomplished," as one historian writes, "toward the middle of the thirteenth century . . . Roman Christendom counted but ephemeral days. From the fourteenth century it ceased to exist," in the sense of such dreams as those of Gregory and Innocent.[3]

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[1] Gregorovius, *Geschicte der Stadt Rom,* V, 260.

[2] *Ibid.,* V, chap. vii.

The so-called *Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy,* beginning with the election of a French pope in 1305; leading in turn to the *Schism of the Western Church,* in 1378, toward the end of which there were for a time three popes; church councils occasioned by this disordered situation, which councils claimed to be valid, without the presence of, or even against the will of the pope—these were the crumbling stones of the edifice of papal temporal aspiration. The whole thirteenth century was marked by other premonitions of this fall. Popes were Bishops of Rome, the traditional seat of the Western empire. Upon this fact, hardly less than upon Peter's legendary claim to supremacy in the Church, the imperial prestige of the papacy rested. Nevertheless, during the second half of the thirteenth century, the popes spent little time in Rome, from where political strife, intrigue, and growing unsanitary conditions were repeatedly driving them. Innocent IV spent but fleeting moments of his papacy (1243-1255) in Rome; Alexander IV (1254-1261) spent there some months, both at the beginning and the end of his reign, but was more often elsewhere. Urban IV (1261-1264) lived in three other Italian cities, and died in a litter, on the way from one of these cities to Perugia. Clement IV (1265-1268) signed but a single state paper in Rome. Gregory X (1271-1276) held his general council in Lyons, lingered long in Provence, and died before entering Rome. John XXI (1276-1277) was chosen pope at Viterbo, and died there without having left the city. Martin IV (1281-1285) never left Tuscany and Umbria after his election.[4]

For the immediate fortunes of the papacy the significant situation arose, that more and more popes came to look to France, the strongest monarchy of the period, for strength and protection. Several popes of the period were indeed French, and finally, in a dramatic struggle between a pope both headstrong and senile, and an able and strong-willed French monarch, the guiding strings of the papacy came into the hands of the latter, as a consequence of which the popes for a time settled down to live in France.

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[3] Fliche, *La Chrétienté Médiévale,* 493.

[4] For a fuller account of the wanderings of the popes during this period see Mollat, *Les Papes d'Avignon,* Preface.

The struggle between Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair, in consequence of which the papacy was established at Avignon, had, like many other important events of the later Middle Ages, some of its roots in the crusading spirit. After the Albigensian Crusade almost any war might hope to masquerade as a crusade. Gradually, because in cases of crusades popes had allowed ecclesiastical incomes to be taxed, Philip of France began to exact more and more in taxes from the religious wealth of his realm, to carry on his wars. For a time, in face of such exactions, the financial embarrassments of the papacy itself forced a somewhat conciliating policy toward Philip's extortions. But when, after the abdication of a saintly monk, whose attempt to rule a Church shaped by Innocent III was rather pathetic, an accomplished and ambitious prince of the Church was chosen as his successor, trouble soon began.

Boniface had grown up, and grown rich, at the papal court. He was a jurist, who knew all the claims and documents of papal supremacy. From the moment of his coronation he appears to have determined to set the Chair of Peter in a more independent position than it had enjoyed in the recent past. Controversy with Philip resulted almost immediately, and out of it came, the year following his coronation, a papal bull, declaring the excommunication, by reason of the very act itself, of any secular prince who laid taxes upon Church property without consent of the Pope. Then, a few years later, and again as a consequence of controversy with the French king, came a bull which was the most absolute proclamation of universal papal supremacy in Christendom ever to be promulgated.

This bull assumed that Christendom and the Church are one, that princes are the servants of the Church, in the hands of which have been placed by Christ two swords (the spiritual and the temporal), both of which swords are in final authority wielded by the successor of Peter, who may merely intrust the sword of temporal rule to princes, to be wielded by them for the Church, according to the will of the pope. Therefore the spiritual power may judge the temporal, and may not be judged by it. Finally, and as a revolutionary claim, it is declared that belief in such supremacy of the Pope, and consequent submission to him, is a required condition of salvation for all human beings.[5]

Though there are many interpretations of the character of Philip the Fair, according to which one may choose to call him a genius, a hero, or a villain, there can hardly be question as to his boldness, decision, and energy. His reply to this bull was a daring act which, even in failing, succeeded in a dramatic way. A conspiracy was formed, as a result of which, aided by the political rifts of Italian politics and the personal hatreds Boniface had accumulated, a small armed band, flying the pennons of France and of the Apostle Peter, captured the pope, in his castle at Agnani, in the middle of Tuscany. The capture was relatively easy, resulting in a few deaths and considerable pillage. To get him out of Italy and into France (where the intention was to try him upon a number of charges, one of which being the legality of his election, since the right of his predecessor to abdicate was not clearly established in canon law) was quite another matter. In the end, forces of his friends having risen in his defense, he was delivered over to them; solving himself the difficulty by dying in a frenzy of rage almost immediately after his release.[6]

In the college of cardinals there were three factions: a French faction, strengthened by the fact that the predecessor of Boniface had created twelve new French cardinals; the anti-Boniface Italian faction, headed by the powerful Roman family of Colonna; and the adherents of Boniface. The election of a successor took the best part of eleven months, and the choice finally fell upon a Gascon, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, to whom the news came while he was upon a pastoral visit in his province. Instead of taking the road to Rome, the new pope, who chose the name Clement V, invited the cardinals to meet him in France, and he was finally consecrated at Lyons.

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[5] From the celebrated bull *Unam Sanctum,* promulgated at a synod in Rome in 1302.

[6] It was, and is still sometimes claimed that he was poisoned, but the above seems to have the best unbiased support.

From Lyons Clement V descended the Rhone to Avignon, and established himself there. Then, for a period of seventy years, the Bishop of Rome governed his diocese, and directed the fortunes of the Church, from French territory, constituting the longest and most conspicuous case of absentee episcopal administration in the history of the Christian Church.[7]

The immediate advantage of this geographical shift of papal power were all with the French king, who was never slow to recognize an advantage when he had one. One of the things he most needed, always needed, was money. We must never, in these closing centuries of the Middle Ages, forget the "gloves and the girdles." Life was in every way costing more. Military campaigns were far more ambitious, and ambitious military campaigns cost money. War was on the way to disappear as a sort of gentleman's sport for more or less petty prizes, and Philip the Fair had many ambitious plans on hand, many of which involved military campaigns. Philip listened to alchemists, and received more substantial immediate relief from debasing the currency, a tempting experiment which always leaves the experimenter worse off in the end. There was, however, in his realm a financial resource in exploiting which he could get a great deal of popular sympathy. The pope safely at Avignon, it soon became possible to turn against the Order of Templars.

The official title of this order was *The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of Solomon's Temple.* Their Rule had been drawn up by Bernard of Clairvaux, and enjoined the usual monastic virtues of poverty, obedience, and chastity. The order's formation had been incident to the Crusades. It being no longer possible to expend much energy in crusading, this order had become one of the richest and most widely spread banking organizations of the time. It guarded not only its own treasure, but that of others intrusted to the Templar's care, and made loans at favorable rates to indigent princes. Its monastic virtues had not grown with its fortune, and many and flagrant departures from the Rule Bernard had drawn for them were not difficult to find.[8] The order was simply suppressed, and its resources scattered. The financial arrangements, since Philip could not merely step in highwayman-fashion and seize them, were complicated in form, but on the whole the largest part of the money went to him. Indeed the financial expedient was so successful that it was soon imitated in other places[9] against other military orders dating from the Crusades.

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[7] The County of Provence was not then, or for long afterwards so far as Avignon and surrounding territory was concerned, actually a part of the realm of France, but entirely within the sphere of French influence.

Elsewhere than in France political powers could not have been expected to welcome a situation which put a large part of the papal power and prestige at the service of a French monarch who was so quick to use it. To be sure relations remained friendly between England and the papacy for a time. Edward II was the son-in-law of Philip. Under Edward III, however, who began to reign independently in 1330, resentment in England against papal claims and exactions became frequent, leaving several monuments of legislation to mark the road toward Henry VIII's later breach with Rome, and culminating in the formal renunciation of the feudal tribute which the English monarch had paid the pope since the reign of King John.

In Germany the effect of this dislocation of the papal court contributed to the growth of national sentiment in the Germanic portion of the Empire. One pope of the period aspired by declaration to separate Italy and the Germanic empire "for all time," while an emperor issued to Christendom entire a manifesto, declaring that the imperial dignity was a direct gift of God, without papal mediation, and that whoever was elected to that office and dignity was, without papal sanction, legitimately the emperor.

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[8] Many of the charges most emphasized against the Templars were absurd, and without any supporting evidence save oral testimony. Under these circumstances this sort of evidence, in support of almost any charge, was not difficult to get.

[9] The Knights Hospitallers and the Teutonic Knights both suffered in similar fashion.

In Italy, where the fall of the Hohenstaufens had weakened the imperial power, princes and communes took advantage of an absent pope to despoil the papacy of its Italian possessions. A situation approaching anarchy developed, out of which rose the princely houses which were to dominate the Italy of the Renaissance. The city of Rome itself went to the dogs in decay and impoverishment when the flow of gold, sucked thither by papal needs and exactions, was diverted elsewhere.

When later, under the successor of Clement V, Germany was for a time placed under papal interdict, people learned to live without any Church,[10] and everywhere belief in the universality of papal rule over Christendom was shaken. None the less the sense of an essential unity in the Church, expressed in a unified institutional form, could not be so easily set aside. Rather, attempts to re-establish the basis of this authoritative unity were inevitable, and during the papacy of John XXII (1316-1334) the emperor's "physician and theologian" (a title of combined offices symptomatic of the period), who had been previously rector of the University of Paris, published a work intending to set the unity of the Church upon another theoretical basis.

He holds that the *rock* upon which the Church rests is not Peter and his successors, but Christ himself. Christ ever continues head of the Church, and all ministers and apostles are but "members of Christ," limbs of the body. Of course he quotes Paul as authority. As to doctrine, the highest source of knowledge as to the Christian faith is the Holy Scriptures, for the writing of which the apostles were inspired, in order that, in the later absence of Christ, followers might know "the precepts and counsels guiding to eternal salvation."

The purposes of the state have to do only with the earthly life of men. The state determines law with reference to their earthly relations, which are aside from the purposes of Christ relating to their salvation. So Christ refused to interfere in disputes concerning earthly possessions. When he said, "Give to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's" he implied a distinct and independent basis for the political state.

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[10] Moeller, *History of the Christian Church,* II, 450.

The basis of a saving faith being the Scriptures, what was to decide their proper interpretation? The doctrine drawn from these Scriptures by the majority of the faithful ought to be the rule of all. For this reason the highest respect should be shown the decisions of general councils. He appears to admit, however, the possibility that even general councils might err, and that they even are not a supreme authority.

As for clerical ministers of the Church, not all of their functions are spiritual, hence they are not to be obeyed against their temporal rulers, where things in which obedience is enforced have not to do with eternal salvation. For a spiritual power to attempt to free a political subject from proper political allegiance is heresy. Even ecclesiastics, if they sin against the state, are punishable by the state.

He denies the primacy of Peter among the apostles, and further states that, even had such primacy been given Peter, that would not insure the passage of this primacy to any subsequent Bishop of Rome. To none of the apostles was a corporate church assigned; all were instructed to preach to all people everywhere.[11]

Such a document was not yet to be of popular influence. It did, however, contribute to the shaping of forces which were to determine the important political questions everywhere to be later bound up with the Reformation.

Descending to the broader strata of Christians in the mass, thousands were shocked by the knowledge that the pope no longer lived in Rome, even ostensibly, but that he had deserted the tomb and basilica of the Apostle Peter. The power of the papacy was not, any more than is the prestige of the Crown in England to-day, a matter merely to be reasoned about. A pope in Rome was a symbol, not only as the last authority of human appeal, with keys to unlock or otherwise the eternal gates of heaven, but also a symbol of known human civilization, to which we to-day give the name Christendom. A pope not in Rome was disturbing. Could one be quite sure that, in going to heaven, it was not necessary to pass by way of Rome? And if, in passing, that successor to whom Peter had turned over his key were absent, upon whom might they count to open the gates for them?

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[11] From the *Defensor Pacis* of Marsilius of Padua.

To add to the doubt and bewilderment, the papacy established at Avignon did not give a very good account of itself. Clement V began by being very generous, not only with Philip the Fair, but with his relatives. His successor, John XXII, vigorously attempted to suppress the stricter followers of Francis of Assisi, many of whom, to be sure, added no stability to these unsettled times. He also had the misfortune of advancing a theological opinion for which the University of Paris felt obliged to rebuke him. Moreover, his quarrels with the emperor led to the setting up of an antipope in Rome. Following him Benedict XII was a reformer, but proved unable to extend his influence far beyond the circle of his own court. This latter pope it was who advanced the fortunes of the poet Petrarch, who some fifteen years later wrote a friend, from the papal court at Avignon:

> Everyone here absorbs into his veins the venom of Babylon, concerning which I have said much, and might say more, were it not that I fear to offend, not certainly the inhabitants of this debased swamp, the horde of great and fortunate, whom I consider poor and pitiable, but myself rather, who am not able to mention such matters without causing my temper to rise, and becoming sensible of the bile moving in me.[12]

Papal courts, before and since, have been greedy, worldly, and frivolous, and the papacy established at Avignon was not without its moments of reforming zeal. But the faults of the court at Avignon aroused particular resentment outside of France, and might easily be laid to the account of the abandonment of the Eternal City. People remembered that, at the coronation of Clement V in Lyons, a wall had collapsed, knocking the pope from his horse, rolling his tiara in the dust, with the result that a precious stone was lost from it. Was not this an omen of God's displeasure?

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[12] Petrarch, *Letters,* Ital. trans. by Fracassetti, III, 158.

And there were other omens.

Early in the second quarter of the fourteenth century the Hundred Years War between France and England began. A long period of comparative peacefulness in France was terminated, and the flowering of civilization was in a measure nipped in the bud. In the east of Europe heresy flourished, and there was a return of pre-Christian rites and beliefs. Semimonastic communities—Beguines, Beghards, Lollards, Cellites, Brethren of the Free Spirit, Friends of God—increased in popular appeal. In general these societies intended to keep within the bosom of the Church. But they were lay organizations, difficult of clerical control. The prophetic spirit, and expectations of the approaching "last days" of the Apocalypse, stalked boldly in their midst. The Beguines, for example, possessed and read "a commentary on the Apocalypse, a little tract on poverty, another of similar sort on begging, a third on the seven evil spirits." [13] These Beguines also taught that Rome was "that Babylon, the great Whore of whom John speaks in the Apocalypse"; [14] soon to be rejected of Christ, after which the "spirituals," these Beguines themselves presumably, were to reconvert the world. Then none would sin any more, "unless perchance it were some petty sinnings in some few," [15] none would offend his neighbor, and all property would be held in common.

Most prodigious of all omens, however, was the plague, the Black Death, which entered Europe from the East in 1347, and extended, during the two years following, over Italy, France, Spain, Hungary, Germany, and England. It is almost impossible to imagine the terror which this plague occasioned. Contemporary accounts, exaggerated no doubt, claim that from two-thirds to five-sixths of the inhabitants of Europe perished. Boccaccio, an eyewitness, tells us that in five months one hundred thousand people perished in Florence. Fifty thousand are said to have died in Paris. Petrarch begins a letter to a friend: "Ah, my beloved

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[13] Bernard Gui, *De modo, etc.*, "De erroribus Bequinorum," iv, 5.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] "Nisi forte peccata venialia in aliquibus," Gui.

Brother, what can I say to you? What can I find to talk of? Where can I turn? On every side all about one sees nothing but terror, weeping." [16] The whole earth seemed stricken with a scourge. The masses went insane with fright and panic. The Jews were in places accused of having poisoned the water and the meadows in which the cattle fed, none stopping to consider how these Jews were themselves overtaken in the evil they were thought to have caused. In mass vengeance thousands of them were burned alive, women leaping into the flames to perish with their husbands; some casting their children in, lest surviving they might be baptized. The pope, Clement VI, elegant and worldly though he was, was no fanatic, and he took the Jews under his protection, giving domicile to many in his own domain of Avignon.

Strangest of all the terror-stricken phenomena of the time were the bands of penitents who, from the spring of 1349, began to appear rather generally throughout Europe—the Flagellants.

Self-punishment by flagellation, as a means of appeasing a deity, or beating sin or evil spirits out of the body, is an old and widespread occasional phenomena of religion, though it does not appear to have become prominent among Christians before the tenth century. Peter Damiani's practice and advocacy of it, in the eleventh century, has already been referred to. Underneath the practice, religion aside, is that perverted neurosis which may make flagellants without any religious incitement or motive whatsoever. Toward the year 1260 an outburst of group-flagellation occurred in some cities of northern Italy, in expectation of the Day of Judgment and the coming of the Holy Spirit, or *third age* of the world,[17] with the added excitement of famine and pestilence, leading to a popular "revival" which began among the common people.

> And all men, both small and great, noble knights and men of the people, scourged themselves naked in procession through the street, with the bishops and men of religion at their head; and peace was made in many places, and men restored what they had unlawfully taken away, and they confessed their sins so earnestly that the priests had scarce

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[16] *Letter,* II, 323. Petrarch's flow of eloquence makes this entire letter well worth reading.

[17] Following the teachings of Joachim of Flora. See chap. xxxiv above.

> leisure to eat. And in their mouths sounded words of God and not of man, and their voice was as the voice of a multitude: and men walked in the way of salvation, and composed goodly songs of praise in honor of the Lord and the Blessed Virgin: and these they sang as they scourged themselves. . . . Moreover, if any would not scourge himself, he was held worse than the Devil, and all pointed their finger at him as a notorious man and a limb of Satan.[18]

The flagellation of the fourteenth century was far more widely spread than this outburst, more definitely organized, and it lasted longer. It appears to have been, originally at least, a concerted attempt to arrest the progress of the plague, originating first in Hungary, as the plague was entering from farther east, and spreading westward with the plague, in a frantic attempt to arrest it by violent acts of penitence. One is not surprised to learn of evidence that, rather than checking the plague, these flagellant bands appear to have assisted in spreading it.

At the outset the movement was under control of definite leaders, each group pledging obedience to a captain, required to have sufficient money to pay their way, aided by such hospitality as was offered them. They were forbidden any conversation with women, were not allowed to beg, but might accept offered hospitality for not more than two days in each town. Twice a day they stripped and lashed each other, the scourges sometimes knotted, sometimes fitted with nails. Their blood, mingling with that shed by their Savior, was expected to wash their souls clean of the taint of sin.

As these bands passed through the country, from town to town, the practice of singing hymns as they went grew more and more general. Miracles of healing, and of raising the dead, were soon credited to some of them. An angel brought from heaven a letter from Christ himself, that was read by the leaders in many places.[19]

Almost immediately religious and secular authorities attempted to check and discountenance this movement. The Sorbonne in

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[18] From *Chronicle* of Salimbene, in the abbreviated form translated by Coulton, and entitled *From Saint Francis to Dante,* 192.

[19] It was this letter which set the period of scourging as thirty-three and a half days. Each day may have represented a year in the life of Jesus.

Paris, which had now become the dominant authority in matters of theology, pronounced formally against the practice. Soon also, as the plague passed, public enthusiasm waned, and frayed nerves turned to sensual excesses. From Siena a chronicler writes:

> Without any restraint almost all our city plunged into evil living, and the same or worse did the other cities of the world. And, according to the tidings that we could hear, there was no part in which those who had escaped from the divine anger [the plague] lived in continence, but as though they deemed the hand of God was weary.[20]

In Rome arose a prophetess, scourging, in prophecies addressed to a series of popes, the Church's sins. To Gregory IX she wrote, just before her death:

> Thy mundane court is plundering my celestial court (the *my* being explained by the fact that she spoke for Christ). . . . Rise up manfully, put on thy strength, and begin to renovate my Church, which I acquired with my own blood; let it be brought back in spirit to its primitive holy state, for now it is a house of shame that is venerated, rather than Holy Mother Church. . . . Since the Pope doubts whether he shall come to Rome for the establishment of peace and the reformation of my Church, I would have him come by all means in the coming autumn. And let him know that he can do nothing more pleasing to me than coming to Italy.[21]

This was in 1373. Instead of the pope's being reëstablished in Rome, five years later came the great schism, with one pope in Rome, another in Avignon. Twenty years after the outbreak of this schism, Vincent Ferrer, later to be declared a saint, quit his office of confessor and counselor to the Avignon pope, Benedict XIII, left Avignon, to go preaching through large portions of France, Italy, and Spain, with a band of flagellants. At one place in Spain the city magistrates drew up a letter to their bishop, to tell what Vincent had accomplished among them. Parts of this letter may serve to illustrate something of the temper of those times:

> Thanks to God, and to the preaching of Master Vincent, there are no longer among us either vices or public sins. For example, no one, young

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[20] Quoted by Gardner, *Saint Catherine of Siena,* 5.
[21] *Ibid.,* 105.

or old, any longer dares to swear by the name of God, nor of the Virgin Mary, nor by the blood of Christ, or any such thing. . . . The public gambling house is closed, and we have renounced our privilege in this respect. None play at dice or other perilous games of chance. People no longer form secret conspiracies, or practice malignant magic, or employ cabalistic signs. No one any longer goes to consult diviners or sorcerers. . . . We have counted one hundred and twenty-three reconciliations, of which seventy had to do with murder, and others with mutilations, of hands, arms, or other members.[22]

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[22] Gorce, *Saint Vincent Ferrer,* 174-175.

## XXXIX

THE "malicious magic, cabalistic signs, diviners, and sorcerers," which Vincent Ferrer is credited with having for a time banished from one Spanish town, were to play a rôle of increasing importance as doubts and questionings gathered about the foundations of the medieval structure. Toward the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century the importance of this matter was recognized, by turning over all questions involving charges of sorcery and magic to the Inquisition. Bernard Gui, who got together and published about 1324 a manual for inquisitors,[1] was obliged to add a short book of instructions as to the sort of questions to be addressed to those suspected of such practices, "following various inventions and false imaginations of superstitious people with respect to evil spirits and demonic doctrines." [2]

Such practices had of course never been stamped out in Europe. As J. G Frazer remarks, in a paragraph dealing with such practices in India, "in Europe, beneath a superficial layer of Christianity, a faith in magic and witchcraft had always survived and flourished among the weak and ignorant." In Europe too, as in India, people have recourse to magical remedies in the trials and emergencies of life, "when the promises of the higher faiths have failed them, as indeed such promises are apt to do." [3]

Indeed every religion, even the loftiest and most dignified, cannot ignore the task of attempting, in some way or other, the banishing of evil. For some few, theories as to the origin or nature of evil may either banish or so transform it as to render it more bearable. For many this will always remain the task of banishing evil spirits, the one comprehensible source of pain and misfortune for which no patent or controllable source has been discovered, to which the imagination of the ignorant is quick to respond; and to which, given but conditions of sufficient stress, even those far from ignorant are not always slow to turn. It is therefore hardly strange that the Christian ceremony of baptism should early have included, and long maintained, elaborate ritual measures of exorcism.

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[1] This work has already been referred to by its Latin title. It was not printed until 1886. The edition here used is of 1926, under title, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur.*

[2] *Ibid.,* book vi.

[3] *The Golden Bough,* Part VI, "The Scapegoat," 89.

Baptismal exorcism was however seldom sufficient to keep the evil spirits permanently banished from intrusion among the actions and affairs of baptized Christians. The older forms of driving out evil spirits continued for long everywhere in Europe, and they were even centralized in a particular season of the Christian calendar—that is, during the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany. During this season it was a common thing in Christendom to build fires intended to drive the evil spirits from the air; straw was wrapped about the trunks of fruit trees to protect them from demons; processions of boys, making as much noise as possible with drums and beaten pans, aimed to frighten evil spirits within hearing; house doors were opened, while with brooms, and again with beaten pots and pans, the lurking demons were swept and frightened from the interior.[4]

Against such common folk-practices Christianity had never taken a determined stand. They not only existed in practically every part of rural Europe during the Middle Ages, but may be found still practiced in some places to-day. Indeed such ceremonies linked themselves with the local church, might be performed with the assistance of the church bells to increase the din, and made more efficacious with holy water from the church font.[5] Those who were appointed to *burn out* the evil spirits might be required to have first obtained absolution from the parish priest. The Bible might be quoted in public admonition against the demons.[6]

But, more comprehensive than such ceremonies directed against spiritual embodiments of evil, was a broader general desire to make a clean sweep of all evil whatsoever, by turning out the past, in a spirit of topsy-turvy revelry, to make way for the new future. This type of ceremonies conveniently takes its name from the Roman custom of the Saturnalia, which, with much of its old-time spontaneity gone, still survives in the carnival of modern Europe.

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[4] *The Golden Bough,* gives many examples.

[5] *Golden Bough,* 157.

[6] *Ibid.,* 158-159, 168.

The origins and original significance of the Saturnalia is difficult to trace and explain, though a period of revelry seems to have been set apart, at some time during the year, almost everywhere throughout Europe and western Asia. In Rome the festival was supposed to commemorate the legendary reign of Saturn, before the coming of the Olympian Gods, but here, as elsewhere, doubtless the ceremony antedated the legend. In historical Roman times about all that remained of the festival was its spirit of feasting and revelry, during which the slave might sit at table and get drunk with his master; might even make fun of him without danger of reproof or punishment. Modern anthropologists believe that, behind the festivities of this period, there lurks the dim memory of a time when the annual cycle was personified by a king priest, holding office for one year only, and in this sense born with the new year; at the year's end also put to death, loaded down as a sacrificial scapegoat with all the misfortune and evil accumulated during his annual period of office.

This much at least seems certain, that this period of revelry, linked originally with the end of one annual period and the beginning of another, is, judged from the standpoint of folk psychology involved, a phenomena both of disburdening and of promise. At this time the maiden, with long-treasured rites, attempted to discover who was to be her husband; pulling, for example, a stick at random from the wood pile, to see whether he would be crooked or straight of body. The farmer expected at this time to discover a prognosis of the weather for the coming year.

This period of revelry, adapted to the Roman Saturnalia before the beginning of the Middle Ages, appears to have become of increasing social significance from the fourteenth century, when all human phenomena evidenced growing instability. Records and comments regarding it become more and more frequent. Throughout the fifteenth century more and more determined efforts were made to root it out, or at least to modify and control it. Indeed one has only to glance at the character of this feast, as it had developed in medieval Europe, to realize how, in a period of religious unrest, it would tend to grow both in popularity and in license.

The carnival period, with its influence from the Roman Saturnalia, had been gathered into the Church, at least as early as the twelfth century, and had found a place in the Church calendar as the "Feast of Fools." Its ceremonies, centering at the altar of church, abbey, or cathedral, became a strange, often licentious, parody of sacred ceremony, even of the mass itself. The following contemporary account tells how the Feast of Fools was celebrated in one part of France:

> On December 17 they chose an *abbas stultus* (abbot-fool). . . . He was shouldered and borne to a place of honor at a drinking bout. Here even the bishop, if he were present, must do him honor. After the drinking the company divided into two parts, one composed of inferior clergy, the other of dignitaries, and sang a doggerel song, each endeavoring to sing the other down. They shouted, hissed, howled, cackled, jeered, and gesticulated; and the victors flouted the vanquished. Then the doorkeeper made a proclamation on the part of the "abbot," calling on all to follow him, on pain of having their breeches slit, and the whole crew rushed violently from the church. . . . On the three post-nativity feasts a distinct *dominus festi* (lord of the feast), the *fool-bishop* . . . took the place of the abbot. On each of these days he presided at matins, mass, and vespers, sat in full pontificles on the bishop's throne. . . . Both on St. Stephen's and St. John's days these services were followed by the recitation of a burlesque formula of indulgence.[7]

Burlesque hymns, assuming the meter of contemporary sacred music, were composed and chanted at these ceremonies. One of these hymns begins:

Gregis pastor Tityrus
asinorm dominus,
noster est episcopus.[8]

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[7] Chambers, *The Medieval Stage,* I, 315 (from a ceremonial of 1367).

[8] *Ibid.,* I, 20, gives text: "Master Tityrus, pastor of the flock of asses, is our bishop."

In some places the fool-bishop was borne to the church on the back of an ass, in others the ass bore him to the altar, elsewhere it seems certain that the ass itself played the bishop's part.

The long struggle to drive this feast from the church into the streets and squares we cannot follow. Protests began to arise as the accompanying disorder became more and more scandalous. In the middle of the fifteenth century the theological faculty of the University of Paris drew up one, the summary from which may serve briefly to describe the character of this revelry, as it awakened its bitterest criticism.

> Priests and clerks may be seen wearing masks at the hours of office. They dance in the choir, dressed as women, panders or minstrels. They sing wanton songs. They eat black pudding at the horn of the altar while the celebrant is saying mass. They play at dice there. They cense with stinking smoke from the soles of old shoes. They run and leap through the church, without blush at their own shame. Finally they drive about the town and its theaters in shabby traps and carts; and rouse the laughter of their fellows and bystanders in infamous performances, with indecent gesture and verses scurrilous and unchaste.[9]

The phenomena of the Feast of Fools means a number of things, not all of which easily group under a single category. Obviously the banishment, either of evil spirits or of the accumulated evil of the year was not a prominent, hardly a conscious element. On the top of such an emotional wave rode the sheer carnival spirit, and ebullition of animal zest, throwing off for a time all the burden of civilized habit and social restraint, in buffoonery, burlesque, grossness and indecency; overturning, in temporary symbolic gesture, an order of things which aimed, and aimed often with passionate fervor, to renounce and thwart the natural impulses of the organic man. That this anarchic revolt should have centered around the services and dignitaries of the Church is hardly strange in the Middle Ages. That clerics should have been the active leaders in it is not more to be wondered at. Such slapstick jollification was a disburdening of the tedium of oft-repeated rituals and multitudinous gestures, which must have become, for the large majority, a rote monotony against which human nature might easily revolt. In medieval theory everything aimed to be either sacred or banned. That which was banned, however, was never banished, even from the most hallowed surroundings. Even Christian art had to find a place for it. Bernard of Clairvaux, as a recent writer reminds us, complained that even the eyes of monks as they walked about their cloisters, "were too often assailed by pictures which could only awaken thoughts unsanctified." [10]

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[9] *Ibid.*, I, 239.

So long as the medieval structure held solid, the Church might arrange to hold together and keep itself erect above this incongruity. The inborn tendency of men to sin was indeed a corner stone of its power. Its penances were, both from the institutional and the psychological standpoint, machinery by which it might keep power over its human flock, even by means of their sinning. It could let them go, in a sense, in such orgies, to catch them back but the more securely in reaction. But growing mistrust of the efficacy and sanctity of the Church's offices, more broadly significant challenges of the social order over which it presided, added a new note of complication. Everything which there was of discontent, distrust, skepticism, naturally poured itself into such opportunities for free expression. Laden with this additional burden, what might have been a safety valve became something more serious and positive—a focus of discontent, a possible menace. So the movement toward suppression grew, successful at least to this extent, that the carnival spirit was driven from its center in the church edifice itself, and into the streets and squares of the towns and cities, passing from the leadership of clerics to that of laymen, one of the precursors of the gradual secularization of the social and communal manifestations of European life.[11]

Even more determined was to be the fight against other ceremonies in which the attempt to come to terms with evil spirits were less hidden than in the Feast of Fools. Such ceremonies and practices also antedated the coming into that part of Europe which classic Pagandom had scarcely touched. Here again Christianity had in a considerable measure attempted first to adapt itself to, and not too vigorously oppose an element of indigenous civilization which it found. In 601 a pope, Gregory the Great, had written a missionary in Britain, to destroy such idols as he found, but not the temples. These might be purified with holy water, and utilized for Christian worship, so that converts might meet in their accustomed places, even slay their accustomed beasts, but no longer as a sacrifice to the "Devil." They might now "kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating, and return thanks to the giver of all things for their sustenance." [12]

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[10] Tuberville, *Medieval Heresy and the Inquisition,* 4.

[11] It is a thesis of Chamber's book, *The Medieval Stage,* quoted above, that medieval drama found its initiation largely in these carnival revels in the churches.

Such advice implies permission to retain, so far as consistent with the new faith, old religious habits. These habits were retained, and their consistency was not always too nicely inquired into. Lines were indeed not always easy to draw, and any laxness or oversight, even more, any turn of ill-luck, was almost certain to tip the scales toward the prohibited. Through all the centuries of the Dark and Middle Ages, a line of recurrent enactments of prohibition and condemnation testify to the continuance of practices judged plainly inconsistent with the Christian faith. Offenses appear to have been leniently dealt with. As late as 1282, a priest of Britain, accused of having led a fertility dance at Easter, about the phallic figure of a god, was none the less allowed to retain his benefice and office.[13] What was clearly not permissible was direct invocation of old gods, which Christians identified with the Devil, whatever or whoever the deity might be. Underneath old practices, not deemed apart from their connection with an old deity harmful, the old gods were but half hidden, and from underneath such ceremonies, when misfortune or distress shocked the faith of some wobbly adherent, there was always the temptation to try another god.

In fact, the triune God, with the Virgin and the aura of saints, who were believed to insure a man's salvation after death, and in some measure protect him meanwhile, by no means causes the denial of other existent spiritual beings, which might be a hindrance or help to human interests.

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[12] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History,* I, 30.

[13] Murray, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe,* 23.

Of all such spiritual beings, those who might be treated with most indulgence were several races, found among the Celts and Teutons, and conveniently lumped together as *fairies.* By etymology fairies seem to have been the *good people,* or *peaceful folk.*[14] While capable of mischief, capricious, and easily irritated, and when injured wont to become cruel and vengeful, they were also grateful for small favors, and quick to return them generously. The Church was bound to oppose these fairies, officially, associating them with paganism, witchcraft, the Devil. The folk-mind accepted this judgment with a large degree of wistful sympathy for this folk, cut off from the promise of eternal salvation. So arose tales in which fairies express hope of being spared in the Day of Judgment. Yet they might be feared even because of their desire to be united with humanity, since it was believed to inspire them to steal men and women, for husbands or wives, or to change in the cradle fairy for human offspring, and thus to share in the eternal human promise of salvation, indirectly. Indeed literature shows that, while it was believed necessary to handle them with precaution, the human imagination had for them far from an unkindly feeling.

These relatively harmless fairies were, however, too soon to be lumped together with all non-Christian spirits whatsoever, in a more determined condemnation of all sorts of beliefs and actions relating men to spiritual beings outside the Christian fold.

Magic was the entering wedge. Christianity had excellent authority for a general attitude of hostility toward magic. The beginning of the prophetic influence in Hebrew religious history was early marked by contests between prophets and magicians, with consequent passages in the Old Testament condemning soothsayers and sorcerers. Also, in its early period, Christianity saw about it much magic, at work to lighten the despair in an age of fading hopes. So again, magic might be condemned as a part of paganism. Penetrating farther into Europe, again it found magical beliefs and practices of many sorts. Its traditional attitude was therefore bound to be hostile. To banish magic was quite another matter, not only above the ability of the Church, but even beyond the psychological attitude of even learned Christians. Instead Christianity developed its own magicians, the martyrs and saints, and its own charms and amulets. So the working of wonders of all sorts was legitimatized.

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[14] While there may be a shade of propitiation in this name itself, the name was bound to affect the conception of their character.

But the wonder-working saints never succeeded in furnishing all the magic desired. And here again the Church was tolerant. The majority of spells and incantations were intended to bring about results generally desirable, and were in no way intended to harm anyone. Unless clearly involving heretical beliefs or practices the Church did not take action against them, and unless it was charged that they injured someone, in person or property, the state also left them undisturbed. Magic was indeed a recognized part of medical practice which, until the fifteenth century, hardly began to escape from the cloister. Monkish physicians were bound to be magicians, and the increased medical knowledge that entered Europe with the Moslem influence rather increased than otherwise the proportion of magic in medicine. Generally, throughout the medieval period, punishments, whether civil or ecclesiastical, were not severe. To be sure, the crime of magic being proportioned to its result, one condemned as having accomplished the death of another by magic means, was condemned to death. Magic practiced against a ruler was treason, and thus also punishable by death. Lesser crimes of magic could usually be compounded for, by money payments so far as civil, by nicely apportioned penance where religion was offended.

As a matter of fact, until early in the thirteenth century, the best type of Christian thought inclined to doubt the efficacy of malevolent magic, because of the belief in the omnipotence of God. Magic claimed to be the exercise of supernatural power, and thus came under the head of miracle. Miracles were worked solely through the power of God, and any pretense or appearance of exerting supernatural power, save as agent of the true God, was but sham and vain delusion.

With the formulation of the scholastic systems, however, doubt as to the reality and efficacy of malevolent magic, or any magic not pretended to be a medium through which the grace of God operated, began to vanish. Thomas Aquinas, for example, having considered at length and with careful dialectic the nature of angels, proceeded, at almost equal length, to consider the nature of the fallen angels, or *demons.* In punishment for their sin of rebellion against God, he concluded, these demons had their primal place of punishment in hell. However, they also exercised their malevolent influence upon men, and as a part of their curse was the continued exercise of this malevolent influence, a part of their time of punishment was passed "in dark or murky air."[15] Since such malevolent spirits lurked in the darkness of the atmosphere, there could no longer be doubt as to the exercise of supernatural influence, the very nature of which was to be counter to the benevolence of God.

This theoretical basis for the exercise of malevolent magic gradually revolutionized the whole attitude toward beings and practices hitherto rather indulgently regarded. The Reverend Robert Kirk, in his book on the fairies, written toward the end of the seventeenth century,[16] tells several places of how those who possess the gift of *second sight* might see and hold converse with the fairies. Doubtless long before his time, "seventh sons of seventh sons," and other clairvoyant and suggestible people, subject to quite harmless hallucinations, and enjoying in consequence a certain distinction in their neighborhood—helping too, by finding lost articles with fairy aid, reciting incantations learned in fairyland, that could hardly fail sometimes to be apparent instruments of good—had conversed with fairies. But when Thomas Aquinas had discovered that all the efficacy of magic, unless within the accredited circle of religious practices and personages, proceeded from the malevolent spirits of unrepentant fallen angels, who lurked in the murky air of dusk or midnight, witchery of every sort was damned. We now see why it was that, early in the fourteenth century the matter of hunting out and trying sorcerers, diviners, enchanters, and magicians of any sort was handed over to the Inquisition; cutting off all legitimate communication between human beings and fairyland, and making the gift of second sight a very dangerous faculty. Now Bernard Gui must draw up a long list of the activities of such persons as exercise by delegation these demonic powers. Here are some of the things they might be suspected of doing: cause discord between husbands and wives; sterilize or fecundate human beings and domestic animals; cause people to eat or drink, for magic purposes, hair, finger nails, and other such matters; predict future events; work enchantments of evil, or cure diseases, with verbal formulas, foods, or philters; discover stolen articles; steal the eucharistic elements for use in their enchantments; form images of wax or lead, baptize or maltreat them, as a way of working the suggested action upon the person the image was baptized to represent.[17]

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[15] *Summa Theologicae,* I, quest, lxiv, art. iv.

[16] *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (1692), and still perhaps the best book on the subject.

It doubtless worked in two directions to prove that the effective assistance of Satan and his demons could be procured, by recourse to the proper persons and means. At all events sorcery and magic practices increased. It was long before the movement of persecuting the Devil's accomplices became general and determined. Late in the fifteenth century a papal bull instituted a vigorous attack. It was no longer doubted, either that demons could work malevolent enchantments, or that these demons were wont to delegate their power. The Pope, Innocent VIII, writes:

> It has come to our ears that numbers of both sexes do not hesitate to have intercourse with demons . . . and that by their incantations, charms, and conjurations, they suffocate, extinguish, and cause to perish the births of women, the increase of animals, the corn of the ground, the grapes of the vineyard, and the fruits of the trees . . . making and procuring that men and women, flocks and herds and other animals shall suffer and be tormented both from within and without, so that men beget not, nor women conceive.

In the meantime discussion of the subject of sorcery and incantation naturally grew—grew even to such extent that before the close of the fifteenth century the whole question as to what precisely witches could and could not do, might be approached by a learned man, in orderly critical investigation, quoting Aristotle, Augustine, and the Bible, with a view to getting the rational kernel of the matter. These are the conclusions of such a treatise, which appeared in 1489:

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[17] See Book VI, in Bernard Gui's *Manuel.*

> 1. The Devil, alone or with the assistance of human beings, can harm neither natural elements, men, nor animals, unless it be that, for reasons hidden to us, God in his mercy, to punish our faults, to add to our merits by temptation, or to manifest his glory, allows the Devil to do so.
> 2. If this power be given the Demon, it can never extend beyond limits God has assigned in a particular instance.
> 3. Though divine clemency may give the Devil power to fascinate our eyes or trouble our senses, so that men believe themselves to be where they are not, see things which do not exist, or appear in other than their proper form, the Devil cannot transfigure men or animals, contrary to the law of nature.
> 4. It is false that witches traverse miles in the silence of the night. They who so believe are the dupes of their dreams or powerful illusions, imprinted by the Devil [with God's permission presumably].
> 5. God alone may scrutinize the future, and alone can penetrate the thoughts of men. The Devil cannot, therefore, himself or by intervention of magicians or witches, predict the future, save by his spiritual faculties, the aspects of the stars or the dispositions of the elements; or as a concession from God, who wishes in this way to affect the consciousness of men and warn them.
> 6. Although witches are themselves incapable of working the least harm, they may accomplish it at the instigation of the Devil. . . . Such persons have withdrawn themselves from the grace of God and given themselves to the Devil. They apostasize and practice heretical rites, in return for which they obtain efficacious powers.
> 7. Therefore it is just that such criminals be punished by death, as the civil code provides.[18]

When this treatise was published witch persecution was almost in its infancy. It was to grow sporadically for almost two centuries, and judging from the above conclusions it might appear that witchbaiters were about to do their best to deprive the deity of an indirect means of operation which he chose occasionally to use.

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[18] Ulric Molitor, *Des Sorcières et des Divineresses,* trans. from original Latin text, with facsimile of text, Paris, 1926.

# XL

The opening of the fifteenth century presented to thoughtful Christians no problem so important as that of restoring the integrity of the Church. The deep wound of schism not only might be called upon to serve as the cause of all the Church's lesser wounds, but made them more conspicuous.

They were conspicuous, and they were much talked about. So ready indeed were people to listen to words of abuse directed against the clergy, from top to bottom of its hierarchy, that one of the early fifteenth century's most influential preachers, himself most moderate in such criticism, remarks:

> When the audience seems bored by a sermon, or painfully affected by the heat or cold of the atmosphere, a single word uttered against either priests, prelates, or the religious orders will immediately suffice to arouse the sleepers and enliven the weary, to refresh those oppressed by the heat as by the fall of a refreshing dew, to transport the chilled into the region of spring and summer, and likewise to render them impervious to hunger and thirst.[1]

The rise of the orders of friars, of which the Franciscans and Dominicans were the most influential, had contributed to a great revival of interest in public preaching. The split in the former of these two orders had turned loose, as wandering and often persecuted radicals, the stricter followers of the Franciscan Rule. Heresy was strictly theological Ecclesiastical abuses might be freely criticized. Friars, passing from place to place with the pope's license to preach, need not fear even episcopal authority, and they did not hesitate to attack the shortcomings of parochial priests or prelates. "Does it not seem," one cries from his pulpit, "that our prelates are sent by divine wrath, or better, by the malice of the Devil, for the purpose of destroying and depopulating the

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[1] Bernardino of Siena.

Church?"[2] These prelates are, in Latin verse of generous summary, "arrogant oxen, hypocritical sheep, luxuriant pigeons, usurers who traffic in sacred things."[3] "Everything else I can believe," says another, "but this only I shall never be able to swallow, that it is possible for a German bishop to be saved."

Of the popular demand for reform and restoration of some sort there could be little doubt, but such restoration might mean, to different classes of persons, quite different things. Simplest of all solutions seemed that of terminating the schism, and reinstituting a single pope in Rome. Such simple cures of radical evils always recommend themselves. In 1409 a council was held at Pisa for the curing of the schism, as a result of which twenty-four cardinals chose a new pope, who took the name Alexander V. The other two claimants, however, refused to resign, so that now, instead of two popes, there were three. To make matters still worse, Alexander V soon died, and the choice of his successor was far from happy. Another council seemed necessary, but this the pope first avoided, and then, when a council was finally held, he managed to render it of no importance. Finally only the persistence of the emperor, and the weak position of the last elected pope, forced John XXIII finally to call a general council, which met in Constance in the year 1414.

At this council John himself appeared. So also did the emperor. It soon developed that one of the first acts of this council was to be a demand for the abdication of its presiding pope. John felt constrained to assent and abdicate, but, escaping soon after from the city, he repudiated the abdication, as an enforced and not a voluntary act, and issued at the same time a bull dissolving the council. The council refused to dissolve at his command, passing resolutions declaring that all General Councils, even without the pope's approval, were legitimate representatives of the Universal

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[2] Meray, *La Vie au Temps des Libres Prêcheurs,* I, 118.

[3] "Boves superbiae et arrogantiae,
Overs hypocrysiae et apparentiae,
Columbiae luxuriae et immunitiae,
Nummulari rapinae et symoniae.

Church. The council then proceeded to choose still another pope, who took the name of Martin V. Of the two remaining claimants, aside from John XXIII, one resigned, and the other took refuge in a fortress in the south of Spain. From 1417 the Church was again effectively under a single head.

Martin V ascended the papal throne with powers, in theory, somewhat abridged. He had been obliged to accept the authority of general councils, and to agree that such be held at regular periods. He also agreed to limit in certain respects his rights to financial tributes and exactions, the burden of which had been constantly growing, not only because of the luxuriousness and extravagance of papal courts, nor because papal political intrigue had become more complicated and therefore more expensive, but also because the purchasing power of money was falling, and periodic payments of fixed money amounts, such as rents and fixed sums of tribute, enjoyed less purchasing power. But these were, though the most definite, still not the only new limiting conditions of papal power. The very way in which the Council of Constance had arranged to cast its votes, by *nations,* marked an increased national feeling and interest which might, even in ecclesiastical matters, run counter to papal purposes.

The Council of Constance had aspired to a program of reform more extensive than a mere cure of schism. Finance came first, of course, and after that some leaders hoped to get to the question of moral reforms among the clergy. But immediately, in the settling of financial affairs, involving feudal rights, city charters, many other complicated angles, jealousy and conflict of interests intervened. About all that could get united support was the limitation of papal rights to certain quasi-taxes. The pope was glad enough to see the council adjourned, and the matter of moral reform left largely in his personal hands. In this task, indeed, he himself never proceeded far. As one writer, with delicate indulgence, expresses it, his mind was so concentrated upon the task of repressing ecclesiastical anarchy, putting an end to usurpation in the papal states, and defending papal prerogatives against arrogant claims of general councils and ambitious sovereigns, that "he had come to overlook the crying need of ecclesiastical reform, then in such universal demand.[4]

Indeed the task closest to home, in the city of Rome itself, was sufficient task for the energy of one man. After years of incessant strife, often carried on in the very streets of the city, churches and monuments were in ruin. Save for a few conspicuous tombs nothing was being built. City ordinances were not obeyed: "heads, feet, carcasses, entrails of slaughtered animals, rotting fish, human refuse" littered the streets. Famine raged; all luxury had disappeared.[5] The troubled populace was glad to put themselves under his care, he intervened repeatedly in civic affairs, and he laid the foundations upon which his successors built, upon a new basis, the papal kingdom of Rome.[6]

As for the council, a new pope chosen and the task of reform left largely to him, there remained the setting up of walls against growing heresy, becoming bolder and bolder east of the Rhine. This task was facilitated by appearance at the council of two archheretics from Bohemia, the more important of whom had been summoned to Constance to defend himself against charges of heresy. Rather than allow these two (John Huss and Jerome of Prague) to further risk theological unity, by arguing their doctrines before the assembly, they were clapped into prison, the former in spite of a safe-conduct given him by the emperor.[7] Then, after a temporary recantation of the latter, they were both burned at the stake.

This may have seemed as simple a disposition of one troublesome problem, as had been the election of a pope of another; and the council might disband with the satisfaction of offering a precedent for later burnings of others at the stake. But these two martyrdoms, that of Huss particularly, proved little more than a desperate gesture. Never before in the history of the medieval Church had a martyrdom occurred at a time when the ideas for which the victim stood were gaining ground so fast, and to a moderate extent even within the council itself. As a matter of actual fact, the papal ideal of Gregory VII and Innocent III had been laid aside by all the important political forces of the time, and had the principal work of Huss, his *Treatise on the Church* been generally known in the council, the result might have been almost as disastrous as the opponents of Huss in the council feared.[8]

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[4] Thureau-Dangin, *Bernardino of Siena,* 102.

[5] Rodocamachi, *Histoire de Rome de 1354 à 1471,* 176ff.

[6] Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom,* VII, 10.

[7] The fact that Huss had a safe-conduct has been denied. The prevailing evidence and opinion is the contrary, but the matter cannot here be discussed.

Though the Council of Constance, one of the great landmarks not only of the history of Christianity, but of general European history, did little toward restoring medieval Christendom, beyond the healing of the Great Schism, and the reëstablishment of the Pope in Rome, it did usher in perhaps the most complicated of all the centuries of European history. These complexities, to be sure, are rather of human psychology than of events. For this very reason they are the more puzzling. In the texture of this century are woven, still inextricably, fraying threads of the old order, with some more and other less conspicuous strands of the new. Superstition hardly less colored the new than the older threads. The medieval faith hovered about the borders of a dark limbo of brooding fear. The new faith in gold had also its superstitions. All sorts of mysterious powers were accredited to this precious metal. It was employed as medicine, mixed as a tonic with foods. Christopher Columbus wrote Ferdinand and Isabella:

> Gold is the most estimable of all materials. With it one may establish a fortune, and obtain everything desirable in the world of wishes. One can with it even get his soul into Paradise.[9]

To summarize the various and often conflicting currents of this century is beyond our compass. The medieval social and intellectual unity, in a measure achieved at the beginning of the thirteenth century, now existed in far less degree. The economic basis of the new order was hardly born, until the end of the century brought gold from the New World. One is far more conscious, both of hunger and of disease, in this century than formerly. Epidemics seem to have been more common in cities, perhaps because the increase of population rendered more and more dangerous to health primitive methods (or lack of method) in sanitation.[10] Politically Spain was building through most of the latter fifteenth century toward a new national unity of distinct color, and preparing for its era of glory and wealth through colonial expansion; both currents marked by the year 1492, in which Castile and Aragon were united as a single nation, and America was discovered. Flanders and Holland had developed a rich burgher class, based particularly upon its textile industries. England was developing an affluent and powerful middle class, who had seats set apart for them in the town churches, in order corresponding with the stalls assigned these merchants in the market place. City officers with their wives sat in pews of honor, tradesmen according to the dignity of their trades, apprentices and servants in the aisle.[11] Italy's short blaze of renascent glory was to be in a measure clipped short by the diversion of trade, resulting from the new discoveries, but the more immediate effect was increased avarice and bitter strife in the economic sphere. Germany, after a long period of stagnation, was to enter, by the middle of the century, a period of marked prosperity, of strong and disturbing contrasts. While the cities flourished and grew rich,[12] a large proportion of the lesser nobles still passed their time far from these centers of a rising intellectual culture, in their castles which overtowered the little town they dominated, more and more dependent upon robbery and pillage for the means of living.[13] In the cities, however, rich burghers endowed libraries and universities, and listened to long sermons upon the most subtle and recondite questions of theology.[14] Behind all this the imperial power grew weaker, the greater feudal princes of Germany, with rich cities at their back, became stronger. One of these princes declared, even in the fourteenth century, his intention to be pope, archbishop, archdeacon, and dean in his own principality.[15] So side by side grew the forces which were to dominate the German Reformation. Most unhappy of the great nations of Europe was France; the end of the Hundred Years War upon her hands, Louis XI struggling warily, wilily, and prudently to rebuild the monarchy upon a new basis, Charles VII swamped by the political cleavage before which he was so helpless at the time of Jeanne d'Arc, famine at times assailing Paris, with wolves lurking in the alleys of the *faubourgs* after dusk.

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[8] Schaff, in Introduction to his translation of the *Treatise on the Church,* of John Huss.

[9] Written after his fourth voyage to America, Von Gleichen-Russwurm, *Die Gotische Welt,* I, i.

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[10] It has been said that one factor which kept the huge court of Francis I of France continually on the go from one of his castles to another, was the fact that after a very short period sanitary conditions became impossible, and the court must move on to allow a general clean-up.

[11] Green, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century* (in England).

[12] Of Cologne, Æneus Sylvius writes in 1458, "Nihil magnificentius, nihil ornatius tota Europa reperias." In Nüremberg the houses of the rich burghers seemed to have been built for princes.

[13] Peter von Andlou (Von Gleichen-Russwurm), *Die Sonne der Renaisance,* 250.

In short it was a century of deep social and economic unsettlement, which mirrored itself many ways in religion. Of all these religious symptoms we can here touch but upon the more significant, which bespoke the puzzlement, despair, and fear of thousands of people, who had lost confidence, at once in the present life, and in the promises of authoritative religion.

Already in the thirteenth century Christian art found, in the *wheel of fortune,* a popular symbol of the uncertainty of human life. One figure, upon the mounting side, was represented as saying, "I shall reign." On the top a throned figure says, "I reign." On the descending side a figure plunges headlong, saying, "I have reigned." Such an allegory is susceptible of more than a single interpretation. The sixth-century Boethius, from whose *Consolation of Philosophy* the motive probably came to the Middle Ages, quotes Fortune as saying, "I turn the wheel that spins. I delight to see the high come down and the low ascend," concluding that "nothing is wretched, but thinking makes it so, and conversely every lot is happy if borne with equaniminity," quite in stoic fashion.[16] To the thirteenth-century Christian the wheel of fortune meant, "All earthly states of fortune are vain and unstable; put your trust in heaven." How could such interpretation better be expressed than by using the wheel of fortune as inspiration in designing a cathedral rose window, the sunlight of heaven shining through the tracery between its spokes, as at Amiens?

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[14] Janssen, *L'Allemagne et la Réforme,* I, book i. Preserved Smith, *The Reformation,* 11.

[15] Smith, *The Reformation,* 44.

[16] *Consolation of Philosophy,* book ii, 2, 4.

The light of heaven was, however, less bright in the fifteenth century. Though the consciousness of the fickleness of fortune was general, it was likely to be met, on the one hand by an attempt to follow the poet's admonition, "Gather ye rose-buds while ye may," on the other by a fear of, and a widespread brooding upon suffering and death.

This brooding upon suffering and death reacted upon the cult of the saints, directing the attention of worshipers toward such as were reputed able to protect against such perils. Other saints, some of whom had been of the first rank, but not venerated so much as protectors as examples of virtuous piety, now received more neglectful attention. St. Christopher became a saint of prime importance, because he was reputed to shield from sudden death. Giant statues of him, most of them later removed from churches because of their grotesque character, were in this century placed near the doors of churches, and the roughest tiniest chapel seldom lacked at least his painted image on its walls. St. Barbara was also given particular attention, since she was believed to insure against the possibility of dying without having received the last rites of the Church.

St. Anthony, the great hero of Eastern asceticism, became for the fifteenth century a physician, a protector against illness. The French king, Louis XI, wore a medal dedicated to him as an amulet, pinned to his hat. The cult of St. Roch, who himself had lived and worked among the plague-stricken of the fourteenth century, won attention, because Europe was not yet entirely quit of the plague, and other epidemics were frequent.

The Virgin, still throned far above the other saints in veneration, the inspirer through centuries of classes so far removed from one another in ideal as monks, soldiers, and gallant courtiers, came to be thought of more and more as the great protectrice of mankind, In her mass people prayed, "Saint Mary, help the miserable, strengthen the weak, console those who weep, pray for the people, protect the clergy, intercede for women." In time she is portrayed, a flowing mantle spread broad, while underneath it the whole Church, prelates, monks, clerks, rulers, nobles, commoners, is refuged.

But people did not only seek protection against suffering and mortal peril; they brooded upon suffering, and that suffering particularly which was believed to have been undergone as a means of sparing mankind the eternal pains of hell. Jesus might be portrayed, displaying between the folds of his parted mantle a body upon which wounds were as generously sprinkled as pockmarks. It was no longer enough to portray, as already in the fourteenth century, the fact that Jesus suffered on the cross. Now the blood shed in his suffering flowed from his side, or from all five wounds at once, dripped or streamed into a fountain, about which men and women crowded to drink, if they did not bathe naked in it. Then, in a still stranger adaptation of this theme, the cross became a winepress, under the plunger of which Jesus is stretched, while God the Father turns the lever, forcing it down, down, until the blood spurts from all his wounds, to be caught in tubs and basins for the saving of mankind.[17]

And another sufferer is offered for religious contemplation—the Virgin. Already in the fourteenth century mystics began to meditate upon the sufferings of the divine mother. In 1429 a synod of the Church added a new festival—*The Anguish and Suffering of Our Lady.* The thirteenth century had attached its meditation only to the happier aspects of the life of the Virgin. But the aged Simeon had prophesied, in the Temple at Jerusalem, that a sword would pierce the heart of Mary.[18] The sword was now multiplied to the sacred number seven, and the seven wounds of Mary were meditated upon, each and separately.

But religious art did not feed and give expression to brooding upon suffering and sorrow. Almost more persistent was the brooding upon death. The suffering Mother of God contemplated, stretched across her lap, the wounded and emaciated corpse of her Son. Little groups—the Virgin, with the other Marys, John, Joseph of Arimathea the most usual figures—tenderly placed the body in its tomb. God the Father might be portrayed, supporting the corpse of his Son upon his knee. Then it was that mourning figures began to decorate the tombs of princes—one in the Louvre many must have seen, a sarcophagus borne upon the shoulders of these "mourners," various expressions of pained sorrow graven on the faces almost hidden within their cowls.

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[17] See Male, *L'Art Religieux du Moyen Age,* III, *La Fin du Moyen Age,* where this subject is treated fully with reproductions of works of art.

[18] Luke II, 35.

The theme of death occupied the imagination in still other forms. "The art of dying" inspired reflection. It was treated in manuscripts, generously illustrated with pictures. A man may be seen stretched upon his deathbed, and meeting one by one the scenes anticipatory of his end. Devils are at his bedside, or underneath the bed, in most of the scenes. In a final attack they crowd their temptations and promises upon him, but in the last scene of all the cross appears in the background, a monk places a candle in the hands of the moribund, an angel at the head of the bed receives the parting soul—a tiny body—while devils howl in a frenzy of mortification and defeat. So the theme, in an edition illustrated with woodcuts, was to spread through Europe.

But the most morbid and sinister of all the popular death motives which at once fed and illustrated this preoccupation was the famous *Danse Macabre,* or Dance of Death.

The *Danse Macabre* appears to have taken its initial inspiration from a tale already current in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Three young nobles, strolling, one with a falcon upon his wrist, come by chance upon a cemetery, where they meet three skeletons wrapped in their shrouds. The skeletons begin to speak. One, rattling a toothless jawbone, says, "I was pope"; the second, "I was cardinal"; the third, "I was notary of the pope." Then, in unison, they admonish the young men: "As we are, so will you be, etc."

Though this theme was copied and recopied through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it awaited the end of the latter century, when preoccupation with the idea of death appears to have begun, to gradually develop. Before the fifteenth century ended it had become a morose epic of death, which in artistic expression, poetry and the plastic arts alike, spread throughout Europe. We need but glance at it as it appeared in 1486, one of the earliest printed books, with a series of drawings, explications in dialogue form, moral reflections in Latin at the head of each page—what might perhaps be called the classic expression of the theme.

This *Danse Macabre* of Guy Marchant, here referred to, had inspiration considerably earlier, in the decoration of a Paris cemetery.

> Item: the year 1423 was made the Danse Macabre at the Innocents, and was begun toward the month of August and finished during the Lent following.[10]

This gloomy series of paintings, decorating the shadowy cloister of the Cemetery of the Innocents, also inspired the poetry of Europe's rarest fifteenth-century poet, François Villon. The Innocents was a gruesome *sacred* bit of ground, where bones and skulls might often be in evidence, since demands to be buried there were so many that few bodies could hope to rest long in its soil, ere they were disinterred to make room for others. Being near the market place, one might almost say in the center of the Paris of those days, it was also a common place of promenade on sunny mornings. Book vendors, ironmongers, sellers of petty merchandise, displayed their goods among the tombs, often indeed upon the flat grave coverings themselves. Pet animals *"levaient la patte contre les monuments des riches orgueilleux,"* awakening amused laughter. Gallants strolled, prostitutes and pimps made assignations. On All Souls Day the crowd was pushing, elbow to elbow, munching cakes and crackers.

In this atmosphere was inspired a treatment of the theme of death which emphasized, with grim irony, the fact that death was

[10] *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris sous Charles VI et Charles VII.*

a great leveler of all human distinctions, and that he snatched his victims suddenly, more often in a moment of triumph. In the treatment of Guy Marchant, no angel appears, no figure representing Christian hope or promise. If the skeletons which represented Death were not demons, there was an abandon, a glee in the manner in which they executed their task which approached raillery so closely that Satan himself might have chosen them to do a task which seemed so decisively his own. No properly Christian characteristic or symbol was left in the portrayal. About the best which could be promised was the consolation given the poor laborer:

> Laborer, who have passed all your time in toil and suffering, you should be glad of death, since it frees you from a great load of care.[20]

The accompanying text was, to be sure, not without admonitions to be interpreted piously. *Prologue* speaks such opening words as these:

> Oh, sensible creature
> Who desires immortal life,
> You have a notable doctrine
> To lead to a good end in this mortal life:
> 'Tis called the Danse Macabre,
> Which everyone learns to dance,
> Natural to men and women alike,
> Death spares neither humble nor great—
> 'Tis a piteable thing to think on![21]

A pitiable thing to think on! That was the best interpretation which could be put upon the Dance of Death, taken as a whole. All the incidental elements of social satire are subordinate to this theme. And men thought much upon it; continued for long to think upon it. *"Der Tod wird Mode"*—Death becomes the fashion, one historian of European fashions and customs expresses it.[22] When at the beginning of the sixteenth century the plague again visited Rouen, and it was necessary to enlarge one parish cemetery for the victims, the cloister built about the new cemetery was decorated, not only the supporting pillars with scenes from this cycle, but the full round of the entablature above was filled with a running pattern of coffins, skulls, spades, and crossbones. In the hideous mocking mood of other presentations, in which men turned to "play with death," skeletons might dance, wine cups or musical instruments in their digitals. *"Il bere assai e godere, e l'andar cantando attorno e sollzando, e di ció che avveniniva ridersi e beffarsi esseri medicina certissima."* [23] In drinking and jollification, singing and dancing, meeting whatever happened with laughter and mocking jokes; there Boccaccio says that many Florentines had found the best medicine in the time of the plague. Here people go a step farther, to take Death as their playfellow

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[20] Laboreur qui en soing et painne
Avez vescu tout vostre temps—
De mort estre contens
Car de grant soussy vous delieure.

[21] O creature roysonnable
Qui desires vie eternelle,
Tu as cy doctrine notable
Pour bien finir vie mortelle: . . .

One cannot, to be sure, sum up the closing decades of the Middle Ages with the Dance of Death. It does, however, represent the bankruptcy of the medieval conception of life's significance, as a mere preparatory existence, or sentence, often seeming to have no more than a negative meaning. Here all the transience and vanity of human life, implied in medieval conception, is kept and magnified; the hope and promise has disappeared. Without this hope and promise the whole conception rested scarcely supportable. It is therefore hardly strange that many should have been given over to reckless living, or that they should have run hither and thither, somewhat as in the early days of Christianity the pagans often did, seeking some safety and assurance. The Virgin, saints, magic, incantation, astrology, everything was tried. The astrologer was even both dignified and mocked, by being given a rôle in the *Danse Macabre* of Guy de Marchant. Against Death, however, none of these things availed. His emissary seizes also the astrologer. Everything must pass—*"Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan!"* Villon, in this ballad, one of the masterpieces of French lyric poetry, in the gripping prayer to the Virgin written for his mother, extracted from this gloomy atmosphere all the pathetic and melancholy beauty which yearning human spirits might see in it; and upon such bitter food human nature could scarcely live.

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[22] Von Gleichen-Russwurm, *Die Sonne der Renaisance.*
[23] Boccaccio, *Decameron.*

If the heavenly promise of salvation had held together and energized existence, so the ideal of the papacy had held together and consolidated the institutions of medieval society. What of the fortunes of the papacy in the fifteenth century? After the Council of Constance public sentiment was against another period of schism. On the other hand, despite this council, national feeling was growing to such an extent that general councils hardly served to settle ecclesiastical political matters, and it was not long before nations and princes separately were arranging their affairs with the Curia, stripping from the pope, both in France and Germany, a large part of his power to dispose of ecclesiastical patronage within these countries.

With Nicholas V (1448) humanism entered the papal palace. Humanism was, however, a sword which cut two ways in Rome, reviving memories of her ancient glory, and within a score of years two conspiracies led by humanists attempted to overturn the temporal rule of the pope in Rome.[24]

The welcome given humanism and the spirit of the Rennaisance at the court of a series of fifteenth-century popes did as much as any other one thing to encourage and propagate this outburst of a new ideal of life. It was, however, an ideal contrary to the traditions of medieval Christianity, which, in an age of decadent cynicism, easily led the habitués of a luxurious court into ways hardly consistent with the pretenses of its ideal. A large proportion of the leaders in this new movement were welcomed at the papal court, who, "while selling to the Church the elegance of their literary style, detested the same Church, with all the force of their minds, become pagan, and their passions, become immoral." [25] Old forms, old enactments remained the same, while more and more, as time went on, less and less pains were taken to preserve even the appearance of action consistent with them. Conditions hardly lacking in other affluent and luxurious courts became atrocities when contrasted with the traditional Christian ideal for its priesthood. Such conditions reached a climax with the rise of the family of Borgia to power in the papal Curia. The first of this family to ascend the papal throne reached it in 1455, as Calixtus III (an old man of eighty), who soon left the Church the sinister legacy of two nephews, advanced to the office of cardinal while still young men. One of these two, Rodrigo Borgia, was destined to be the fifteenth century's last pope, with the added distinction of being the worst since the year 1000.

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[24] "Le fait que domine l'histoire de Rome depuis le plus haut moyen age, c'est le regret qu'avaient les Romains de n'être plus les maîtres du monde et leur ardente ambition de le revenir," Radocanachi, *Histoire de Rome,* 1354-1417. The two conspiracies occurred under Nicholas V and Paul II.

[25] Giraud, L'Église Romaine et les Origines de la Renaissance.

Rodrigo Borgia became pope, as Alexander VI, in 1492. While Italy's political aspect was at its gloomiest, and the city of Rome swarmed with adventurers, prostitutes, and assassins, Alexander openly maintained a train of mistresses, and plundered the papal properties to further the ambitions of his children, of whom the ablest, Cæsar Borgia, inspired the writing of Machiavelli's *Prince.* Then, as the last dark deed of the fifteenth-century papacy, the court openly exulted in the arrest of the Florentine reformer Savonarola, insisted that he be sent to Rome for judgment, and when the Florentines were unwilling to grant this demand, they arranged that his judges be chosen among his bitterest foes, hounded him with tortures, until the faggots were piled in the public square for his martyrdom.

So, among many currents which we cannot trace, ideals forming and dissolving, the elaborate medieval structure, by which men were to mount to heaven, moldered away; the flesh rotted from the living organism of promise, leaving the skeletons of the Dance of Death.

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